



# CORNELIUS O'DOWD



UPON  
**MEN AND WOMEN**  
AND  
OTHER THINGS IN GENERAL

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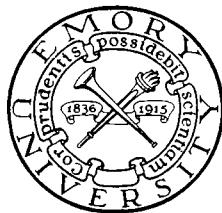
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CORNELIUS O'DOWD.



# CORNELIUS O'DOWD

UPON

MEN AND WOMEN

AND

OTHER THINGS IN GENERAL

I care not a fig  
For Tory or Wig,  
But sit in a bowl and kick round me.

LONDON:

CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193, PICCADILLY

1873.





## NOTICE.

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AMIALE AND ACCOMPLISHED READER,—

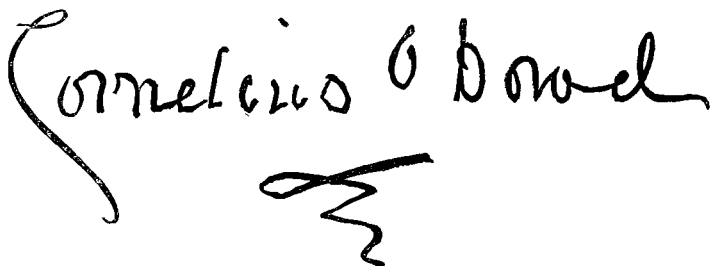
As I have very little to say for myself that is not said in some of my opening pages, there is no need that I should delay you on the threshold.

You will learn, if you take the trouble, by what course of events I came to my present pursuit, converting myself into what a candid, but not complimentary, friend has called “a diverting Vagabond.”

The fact was, I gave the world every reasonable opportunity of knowing that they had a remarkable man amongst them, but, with a stupidity all their own, they wouldn't see it; so that when the solicitor who once gave me a brief died—I believe it was a softening of the brain—I burned my wig and retired from the profession.

Now, let people say what they may, it is by no means easy to invent a new line of life; and even if you should, there are scores of people ready to start up and seize on your discovery; and as I write these lines I am by no means sure that to-morrow will not see some other Cornelius O'Dowd inviting the public to a

feast of wisdom and life-knowledge, with perhaps a larger stock than my own of "things not generally known." I will disparage no man's wares. There is, I feel assured, a market for us all. My rivals, or my imitators, whichever you like to call them, may prove superior to me; they may be more ingenious, more various, more witty, or more profound; but take my word for it, bland Reader, there is always something in the original tap, whether the liquor be Harvey sauce or L.L. whisky, and such is mine. You are, in coming to me, frequenting the old house; and if I could only descend to it, I could print you more testimonials to success than Mr. Morrison's of the pills, or the other man of cod-liver oil, but I scorn to give the names, imparted as they were in secret gratitude. One only trick of the trade I will condescend to—it is to assure you that you had need to beware of counterfeits, and that no O'Dowderies are genuine except signed by me,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cornelius O'Dowd". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first letter 'C' is large and loops around the beginning of the name. Below the main signature, there is a smaller, stylized flourish or scribble.

My heart is broke with requests for my autograph. Will a sympathizing public accept the above?—which, of course, will be immediately photographed.

# CONTENTS.



	PAGE
MYSELF . . . . .	I
ADVENTURERS . . . . .	8
A FRIEND OF GIOBERTI'S . . . . .	20
THE ITALIANS AND THEIR EMPEROR . . . . .	32
GARIBALDI'S WORSHIPPERS . . . . .	36
SOMETHING ABOUT SOLFERINO AND SHIPS . . . . .	42
THE STRANGER AT THE CROCE DI MALTA . . . . .	49
THE STRANGE MAN'S SORROW . . . . .	55
ITALIAN LAW AND JUSTICE . . . . .	62
R. N. F., THE GREAT CHEVALIER D'INDUSTRIE OF OUR DAY	71
GARIBALDI . . . . .	93
THE DECLINE OF WHIST . . . . .	102
FOREIGN CLUBS . . . . .	112
DECLINE OF THE DRAMA . . . . .	118
A GRUMBLE . . . . .	126
OF OUR BROTHERS BEYOND THE BORDER . . . . .	132
THE RULE NISI . . . . .	137
LINGUISTS . . . . .	144
SERIALS AND THREE VOLUMES . . . . .	151

	PAGE
BE ALWAYS READY WITH THE PISTOL . . . . .	160
THE MAN VERSUS HIS WORK . . . . .	170
A "NOW" AND A "THEN" . . . . .	182
SERVANTS . . . . .	189
REFORMATORIES . . . . .	194
SCIENTIFIC CONGRESSES . . . . .	205
PARSONITIS . . . . .	211
ABOUT DOCTORS . . . . .	219
ON CERTAIN DROLL PEOPLE . . . . .	225
THE PEOPLE WHO COME LATE . . . . .	230
GOING INTO PARLIAMENT . . . . .	237
CONTINENTAL EXCURSIONISTS . . . . .	242
A WORD FOR AN ILL-USED CLASS . . . . .	250
A NEW CAREER . . . . .	257
THE ENGLISH INQUISITION . . . . .	264
THRIFT . . . . .	270
A PERSONAL-PARLIAMENTARY . . . . .	277
GLIMPSES OF BLISS . . . . .	284
ANONYMOUS AUTHORSHIP . . . . .	290
SWANLIKE GEESE . . . . .	295
O'DOWD'S EXPERIENCES "EN VOYAGE."—ACT I. . . . .	303
O'DOWD'S EXPERIENCES "EN VOYAGE."—ACT II. . . . .	320
IN RETIREMENT . . . . .	332
HOW OUR VILLAGE BECAME A CAPITAL AND NEVER KNEW IT	350
HERO-WORSHIP AND ITS DANGERS: A STORY . . . . .	361
THE PICTURESQUE IN MORALS . . . . .	382
TWADDLING REMINISCENCES . . . . .	390

# CORNELIUS O'DOWD.



## MYSELF.

BLAND READER,—If you ever look into the Irish papers—and I hope you are not so exclusive regarding them as is Mr. Cobden with the *Times*—you will see that, under the title, “Landed Estates Court, County Mayo,” Judge Dobbs has just sold the town and lands of Kilmuraynachlish, Ballaghy, and Gregnaslattery, the property of Cornelius O’Dowd, Esq., of Dowd’s Folly, in the same county.

Now the above-recited lands, measuring seven hundred and fourteen acres, two roods, and eleven perches, statute measure, were mine, and I am the Cornelius O’Dowd, Esq., referred to in the same paragraph.

Though it is perfectly true that, what between mortgages, settlement claims, and bonds, neither my father nor myself owned these lands any more than we did the island of Jamaica, it was a great blow to me to be sold out; for, somehow or other, one can live a long time in Ireland on parchment—I mean on the mere



documents of an estate that has long since passed away; but if you come once to an open sale and Judge Dobbs, there's an end of you, and you'll not get credit for a pair of shoes the day after.

My present reason for addressing you does not require that I should go into my family history, or mention more of myself than that I was called to the Bar in '42; that I stood an unsuccessful election for Athlone; that I served as a captain in the West Coast Rifles; that I married a young lady of great personal attractions; and completed my misfortunes by taking the chairmanship of the Vichnasheeshee silver mines, that very soon left me with nothing but copper in my own pocket, and sent me to Judge Dobbs and his Court on the Inns Quay.

Like the rest of my countrymen, I was always hoping the Government would "do something" for me. I have not missed a levee for fourteen years, and I have shown the calves of my legs to every vicerealty since Lord Clarendon's day; but though they all joked and talked very pleasantly with me, none said, "O'Dowd, we must do something for you;" and if it was to rain commissionerships in lunacy, or prison inspectorships, I don't believe one would fall upon C. O'D. I never knew rightly how it was, but though I was always liked at the Bar mess, and made much of on circuit, I never got a brief. People were constantly saying to me, "Con, if you were to do this, that, or t'other, you'd make a hit;" but it was always conditional on my being somewhere, or doing something that I never had attempted before.

It was clear, if I was the right man, I wasn't in the right place; and this was all the more provoking,

because, let me do what I would, some one was sure to exclaim, "Con, my boy, don't try that; it is certainly not in your line." "What a capital agent for a new assurance company you'd be!" "What a success you'd have had on the stage! You'd have played Sir Lucius better than any living actor. Why don't you go on the boards? Why not start a penny newspaper? Why not give readings?" I wonder why they didn't tell me to turn organist or a painter in oils.

"You're always telling us how much you know of the world, Mr. O'Dowd," said my wife; "I wish you could turn the knowledge to some account."

This was scarcely generous, to say the least of it. Mrs. O'D. knew well that I was vain of the quality—that I regarded it as a sort of specialty. In fact, deeming, with the poet, that the proper study of mankind was man, I had devoted a larger share of my life to the inquiry than quite consisted with professional advancement; and while others pored over their Blackstone, I was "doing Baden;" and instead of term reports and Crown cases, I was diverting myself in the Oberland or on the Lago Maggiore.

"And with all your great knowledge of life," continued she, "I don't exactly see what it has done for you."

Now, Mrs. O'Dowd being, as you may apprehend, a woman, I didn't waste my time in arguing with her—I didn't crush her, as I might, by telling her that the very highest and noblest of a man's acquirements are, *ipso facto*, the least marketable; and that the boasted excellence of all classical education is in nothing so conspicuous as in the fact that Greek and Latin cannot be converted into money as readily as vulgar fractions

and a bold handwriting. Being a woman, as I have observed, Mrs. O'D. would have read the argument backwards, and stood out for the rule-of-three against Sophocles and "all his works." I simply replied, with that dignity which is natural to me, "*I am* proud of my knowledge of life; I do recognize in myself the analyst of that strange mixture that makes up human chemistry; but it has never occurred to me to advertise my discovery for sale, like Holloway's Pills or somebody's cod-liver oil." "Perhaps you knew nobody would buy it," cried she, and flounced out of the room, the bang of the door being one of the "epigrams in action" wives are skilled in.

Now, with respect to my knowledge of life, I have often compared myself to those connoisseurs in art who, without a picture or an engraving of their own, can roam through a gallery, taking the most intense pleasure in all it contains, gazing with ecstasy at the Raffaeles, and lingering delighted over the sunny landscapes of Claude. To me the world has, for years, imparted a sense of much enjoyment. Human nature has been my gallery, with all its variety, its breadth, its effect, its warm colouring, and its cold tints.

It has been my pride to think that I can recognize every style and every "handling," and that no man could impose a copy upon me for an original. "And can it be possible," cried I aloud, "that while picture-dealers revel in fortune—fellows whose traffic goes no higher than coloured canvas—that I, the connoisseur of humanity, the moral toxicologist—I, who read men as I read a French comedy—that I should be obliged to deny myself the generous claret my doctor thinks essential to my system, and that repose and change of

scene he deems of more consequence to me than mere physic?"

I do not—I will not—I cannot believe it. No class of persons could be less spared than pilots. Without their watchful skill the rich argosy that has entered the chops of the Channel would never anchor in the Pool. And are there no sand-banks, no sunk rocks, no hidden reefs, no insidious shoals, in humanity? Are there no treacherous lee-shores, no dangerous currents, no breakers? It is amidst these and such as these I purpose to guide my fellow-men, not pretending for a moment to the possession of any heaven-born instinct, or any inspired insight into Nature. No; I have toiled and laboured in the cause. The experience that I mean to offer for sale I have myself bought, occasionally far more dearly than I intend to dispose of it. *Haud ignarus mali*; I am willing to tell where I have been shipwrecked, and who stole my clothes. "Don't tell me of your successes," said a great physician to his colleague, "tell me of your blunders; tell me of the people you've killed." I am ready to do this, figuratively of course, for they were all ladies; and more, I will make no attempt to screen myself from the ridicule that may attach to an absurd situation, nor conceal those experiences which may subject me to laughter.

You may deem me boastful if I have to set forth my qualifications; but what can I do? It is only when I have opened my pack and displayed my wares that you may feel tempted to buy. I am driven, then, to tell you that I know everybody that is worth knowing in Europe, and some two or three in America; that I have been everywhere—eaten of everything—

seen everything. There's not a railway guard from Norway to Naples doesn't grin a recognition to me; not a waiter from the Trois Frères to the Wilde Mann doesn't trail his napkin to earth as he sees me. Ministers speak up when I stroll into the Chamber, and *prima donnas* soar above the orchestra, and warble in ecstasy as I enter the pit.

I don't like—I declare to you I do not like—saying these things; it smacks of vanity. Now for my plan. I purpose to put these my gifts at your disposal. The year before us will doubtless be an eventful one. What between Danes, Poles, and Italians, there must be a row somewhere. The French are very eager for war; and the Austrians, as Paddy says, “are blue-moulded for want of a beatin’” There will be grand “battle-pieces” to paint; but, better than these, portraits, groups, “tableaux de genre”—Teniers bits, too, at the porch of an ale-house, and warm little interiors, in the style of Mieris. I shall be instructive at times—very instructive; and whenever I am very nice and dull, be assured that I'm “full of information, and know my subject thoroughly.”

As “your own correspondent,” I am free to go wherever I please. I have left Mrs. O'D. in Ireland, and I revel in an Arcadian liberty. These are all my credentials; and if with their aid I can furnish you any amusement as to the goings-on of the world and its wife, or the doings of that amiable couple in politics, books, theatres, or socialities, I seek for nothing more congenial to my taste, nor more adapted to my nature, as a bashful Irishman.

If I will not often obtrude, I will not altogether avoid, my personal experiences; for there is this to be



said, that no testimony is worth much unless we know something of the temper, the tastes, and the character of the witness. We have all heard, for instance, of the gentleman who couldn't laugh at Munden's drolleries on the stage for thinking of a debt of ten pounds that the actor owed him : and this same spirit has a great deal to do—far more than we like to own—with our estimate of foreign countries. It is so hard to speak well of the climate where we had that horrible rheumatism, or laud the honesty of a people when we think of that rascally scoundrel of the Hotel d'Odessa. For these reasons I mean to come into the witness-box occasionally, and give you frankly, not merely my opinions, but the way they were come by. I don't affect to be superior to prejudices ; I have as many of these as a porcupine has bristles. There's all the egotism I mean to inflict on you, unless it comes under the guise of an incident—"a circumstance which really occurred to the author"—and now *en route*.

## ADVENTURERS.

I WONDER am I right in thinking that the present race of travelling English know less about the Continent and foreigners generally than their predecessors of, say, five-and-twenty years ago. Railroads and rapid travelling might be one cause ; another is, that English is now more generally spoken by all foreigners than formerly ; and it may be taken as a maxim that nothing was ever asked or answered in broken phraseology that was worth the hearing. People with a limited knowledge of a strange language do not say what they *wish*, but what they *can* ; and there is no name for the helplessness of him who is tied up in his preter-pluperfect tense. Now, we English are not linguists ; even our diplomatists are remarkable for their little proficiency in French. I'm not sure that we don't benefit by this in the long run. " Reden ist silber, aber Schweigen ist gold "—" Speech is silver, but silence is gold," says the German adage ; and what a deal of wisdom have I seen attributed to a man who was posed by his declensions into a listener ! One of the only countrymen of my own who has made a great career lately in public life is not a little indebted to deafness for it. He was so unlike those rash, impetuous,

impatient Irish, who *would* interrupt; he listened, or seemed to listen, and he even smiled at the sarcasms that he did not hear.

Listening, if we did but know it, sits more gracefully on us than speech, when that speech involves the denial of genders, and the utter confusion of all cases and tenses.

Next to holding their tongues, there's another thing I wish you English would do abroad, which is, to dress like sane and responsible people. Men are simply absurd; but the women, with their ill-behaved hoops and short petticoats, are positively indecent; but the greatest of all their travelling offences is the proneness to form acquaintance at *tables-d'hôte*.

It is, first of all, a rank indiscretion for any but men to dine at these places. They are almost, as a rule, the resort of all that is disreputable in both sexes. You are sure to eat badly, and in the very worst of company. My warning is, however, meant for my countrywomen only: men can, or at least ought, to take care of themselves. As for myself, don't be shocked, but I do like doubtful company; that is, I am immensely interested by all that class of people which the world calls adventurers, whether the same be railroad speculators, fortune-hunters, discoverers of inexhaustible mines, or Garibaldians. Your respectable man, with a pocket-book well stored with his circular notes, and his passport in order, is as uninteresting as a "Treckshuyt" on a Dutch canal; but your "martyr to circumstance" is like a smart felucca in a strong Levanter; and you can watch his course—how he shakes out his reefs or shortens sail—how he flaunts out his bunting or hides his colours—with an un-

flagging interest. I have often thought what a deal of cleverness, what stores of practical ability, were lost to the world in these out-at-elbow fellows, who speak every language fluently, play every game well, sing pleasingly, dance, ride, row, and shoot, especially with the pistol, to perfection. There they are, with a mass of qualities that win success! and, what often is harder, win goodwill in life! There they are, by some unhappy twist in their natures, preferring the precarious existence of the racecourse or the billiard-table; while others, with about a tithe of their talents, are high in place and power. I met one of these men to-day, and a strong specimen of the class, well dressed, well whiskered, very quiet in manner, almost subdued in tone, but with a slight restlessness in his eye that was very significant. We found ourselves at table, over our coffee, when the others had left, and fell into conversation. He declined my offered cigar with much courtesy, preferring to smoke little cigarettes of his own making; and really the manufacture was very adroit, and, in its way, a study of the maker's habits. We talked over the usual topics—the bad dinner we had just eaten, the strange-looking company, the discomfort of the hotel generally, and such-like.

“Have we not met before?” asked he, after a pause. “If I don't mistake, we dined together aboard of Leslie's yacht, the Fawn.”

I shook my head. “Only knew Sir Francis Leslie by name; never saw the Fawn.”

The shot failed, but there was no recoil in his gun, and he merely bowed a half apology.

“A yacht is a mistake,” added he, after another interval. “One is obliged to take, not the men one

wants, but the fellows who can bear the sea. Leslie, for instance, had such a set that I left him at Messina. Strange enough, they took us for pirates there."

"For pirates!"

"Yes. There were three fishing boats—what they call *Bilancelle*—some fifteen or sixteen miles out at sea, and when they saw us coming along with all canvas set, they hauled up their nets, and ran with all speed for shore. Rather absurd, wasn't it? but, as I told Leslie about his friends, the blunder wasn't so great after all; there was only a vowel between Raffs and Riffs."

The disparagement of "questionable people" is such an old device of adventurers, that I was really surprised such a master of his art as my present friend would condescend to it. It belonged altogether to an inferior practitioner; and, indeed, he quickly saw the effect it had produced upon me, as he said, "Not that I care a straw for the fellows I associate with; my theory is, a gentleman can know any one."

Richard was himself again as he uttered this speech, lying well back in his chair, and sending a thin cloud of incense from the angle of his mouth.

"What snobs they were in Brummel's day, for instance, always asking if this or that man was fit to be known! Why, sir, it was the very fellows they tabooed were the cream of the set; 'it was the cards they threw out were the trumps.'"

The illustration came so pat that he smiled as he perceived by a twinkle of my eye that I appreciated it.

"My father," continued he, "knew Brummel well, and he told me that his grand defect was a want of personal courage—the very quality of all others his



career required. His impertinences always broke down when brought to this test. I remember an instance he mentioned.

“Amongst the company that frequented Carlton House was a certain old Admiral P——, whom the Prince was fond of inviting, though he did not possess a single agreeable quality, or any one convivial gift, except a great power of drinking the very strongest port without its producing the slightest show of effect upon him.

“One night Brummel, evidently bent on testing the old sailor's head, seated himself next him, making it his business to pass the decanters as briskly as he could. The admiral asked nothing better; filled and drank bumpers. Not content with this legitimate test, Brummel watched his opportunity when the admiral's head was turned, and filled his glass up to the brim. Four or five times was the trick repeated, and with success; when at last the admiral, turning quickly around, caught him in the very act, with the decanter still in his hand. Fixing his eyes upon him with the fierceness of a tiger, the old man said, ‘Drink it, sir—drink it!’ and so terrified was Brummel by the manner and the look that he raised the glass to his lips and drained it, while all at the table were convulsed with laughter.”

The Brummel school—that is, the primrose-glove adventurers—were a very different order of men from the present-day fellows, who take a turn in Circassia or China, or a campaign with Garibaldi; and who, with all their defects, are men of mettle and pluck and daring. Of these latter I found my new acquaintance to be one.

He sketched off the early part of the “expedition”

graphically enough for me, showing the disorder and indiscipline natural to a force where every nationality of Europe was represented, and not by its most favourable types.

"I had an Irish servant," said he, "whose blunders would fill a volume. His prevailing impression, perhaps not ill-founded on the whole, was, that we all had come out for pillage; and while a certain reserve withheld most of us from avowing this fact, he spoke of it openly and freely, expatiating admiringly on Captain This and Major That, who had done a fine stroke of work in such a store, or such another country-house. As for his blunders, they never ceased. I was myself the victim of an absurd one. On the march from Melazzo I got a severe strain in the chest by my horse falling and rolling over me. No bone was broken, but I was much bruised, and a considerable extravasation of blood took place under the skin. Of course I could not move, and I was provided with a sort of litter, and slung between two mules. The doctor prescribed a strong dose of laudanum, which set me to sleep, and despatched Peter back to Melazzo with an order for a certain ointment, which he was to bring without delay, as the case was imminent; this was impressed upon him, as the fellow was much given to wandering off, when sent of a message, after adventures of his own.

"Fully convinced that I was in danger, away went Peter, very sad about me, but even more distressed lest he should forget what he was sent for. He kept repeating the words over and over as he went, till they became by mere repetition something perfectly incomprehensible, so that when he reached Melazzo nobody

could make head or tail of his message. Group after group gathered about and interrogated him, and at last, by means of pantomime, discovered that his master was very ill. Signs were made to inquire if bleeding was required, or if it was a case for amputation, but he still shook his head in the negative. 'Is he dying?' asked one, making a gesture to indicate lying down. Peter assented. 'Oh, then it is the *unxione estrema* he wants!' 'That's it,' cried Peter, joyfully—'*unxione* it is.' Two priests were speedily found and despatched; and I awoke out of a sound sleep under a tree to see three lighted candles on each side of me, and two priests in full vestments standing at my feet, and gabbling away in a droning sort of voice, while Peter blubbered and wrung his hands unceasingly. A jolly burst of laughter from me soon dispelled the whole illusion, and Peter had to hide himself for shame for a week after."

"What became of the fellow—was he killed in the campaign?"

"Killed! nothing of the kind; he rose to be an officer, served on Nullo's staff, and is at this very hour in Poland, and, if I mistake not, a major."

"Men of this stamp make occasionally great careers," said I, carelessly.

"No, sir," replied he, very gravely. "To do anything really brilliant, the adventurer must have been a gentleman at one time or other: the common fellow stops short at petty larceny; the man of good blood always goes in for the mint."

"There was, then," asked I, "a good deal of what the Yankees call 'pocketing' in that campaign of Garibaldi's?"

"Less than one might suppose. Have you not occasionally seen men at a dinner-party pass this and refuse that, waiting for the haunch, or the pheasant, or the blackcock that they are certain is coming, when all of a sudden the jellies and ices make their appearance, and the curtain falls? So it was with many of us; we were all waiting for Rome, and licking our lips for the Vatican and the Cardinals' palaces, when in came the Piedmontese and finished the entertainment. If I meet you here to-morrow, I can tell you more about this;" and so saying he arose, gave me an easy nod, and strolled away.

"Who is that most agreeable gentleman who took his coffee with me?" asked I of the waiter as I entered the *salle*.

"It's the Generale Inglese, who served with Garibaldi."

"And his name?"

"Ah, *per l'acco*! I never heard his name—Garibaldi calls him Giorgio, and the ladies who call here to take him out to drive now and then always say Giorgino—not that he's so very small, for all that."

My Garibaldian friend failed in his appointment with me this morning. We were to have gone together to a gallery, or a collection of ancient armour, or something of this sort, but he probably saw, as your clever adventurer *will* see, with half an eye, that I could be no use to him—that I was a wayfarer like himself on life's highroad; and prudently turned round on his side and went to sleep again.

There is no quality so distinctive in this sort of man or woman—for adventurer has its feminine—as the rapid intuition with which he seizes on all available

people, and throws aside all the unprofitable ones. A money-changer detecting a light napoleon is nothing to it. What are the traits by which they guide their judgment—what the tests by which they try humanity, I do not know, but that they do read a stranger at first sight is indisputable. That he found out Cornelius O'Dowd wasn't a member of the British Cabinet, or a junior partner in Baring's, was, you may sneeringly conjecture, no remarkable evidence of acuteness. But why should he discover the fact—fact it is—that he'd never be one penny the richer by knowing me, and that intercourse with me was about as profitable as playing a match at billiards "for the table"?

Say what people will against roguery and cheating, rail as they may at the rapacity and rascality one meets with, I declare and protest, after a good deal of experience, that the world is a very poor world to him who is not the mark of some roguery! When you are too poor to be cheated, you are too insignificant to be cherished; and the man that is not worth humbugging isn't very far from bankruptcy.

It gave me a sort of shock, therefore, when I saw that my friend took this view of me, and I strolled down moodily enough to the Chamber of Deputies. Turin is a dreary city for a lounge; even a resident finds that he must serve a seven years' apprenticeship before he gets any footing in its stiff ungenial society—for of all Italians, nothing socially is less graceful than a Piedmontese. They have none of the courteous civility, none of the urbane gentleness, of the peninsular Italians. They are cold, reserved, proud, and eminently awkward; not the less so, perhaps, that their habitual tongue is the very vilest jargon that ever

disfigured a human mouth. Of course this is an efficient barrier against intercourse with strangers; and though French is spoken in society, it bears about the same relation to that language at Paris, as what is called pigeon-English at Hong-Kong does to the tongue in use in Belgravia.

When I reached the Palazzo Carignan, as the Chamber is called, the *séance* was nearly over, and a scene of considerable uproar prevailed. There had been a somewhat sharp altercation between General Bixio and the "Left," and M. Mordini had repeatedly appealed to the President to make the General recall some offensive epithets he had bestowed on the "party of movement." There were the usual cries and gesticulations, the shouts of derision, the gestures of menace; and, above all, the tinkle-tinkle of the President's bell, which was no more minded than the summons for a waiter in an Irish inn; and on they went in this hopeless way, till some one, I don't know why, cried out, "That's enough—we are satisfied;" by which it seemed that somebody had apologized, but for what, or how, or to whom, I have not the very vaguest conception.

With all their depreciation of France, the Italians are the most persistent imitators of Frenchmen, and the Chamber was exactly a copy of the French Chamber in the old Louis Philippe days—all violence, noise, sensational intensity, and excitement.

I have often heard public speakers mention the difficulty of adjusting the voice to the size of a room in which they found themselves for the first time, and the remark occurred to me as figuratively displaying one of the difficulties of Italian public men. The speakers in

reality never clearly knew how far their words were to carry—whether they spoke to the Chamber or to the Country.

Is there or is there not a public opinion in Italy? Can the public speaker direct his words over the heads of his immediate surrounders to countless thousands beyond them? If he cannot, Parliament is but a debating-club, with the disadvantage of not being able to select the subjects for discussion.

The glow of patriotism is never rightly warm, nor is the metal of party truly malleable, without the strong blast of a public opinion.

The Turin Chamber has no echo in the country; and, so far as I see, the Italians are far more eager to learn what is said in the French Parliament than in their own.

I remember an old waiter at the Hibernian Hotel in Dublin, who got a prize in the lottery and retired into private life, but who never could hear a bell ring without crying out, "Coming, sir." The Italians remind me greatly of him: they have had such a terrible time of flunkeyism, that they start at every summons, no matter what hand be on the bell-rope.

To be sure the French did bully them awfully in the last war. Never was an alliance more dearly paid for. We ourselves are not a very compliant or conciliating race, but we can remember what it cost us to submit to French insolence and pretension in the Crimea; and yet we did submit to it, not always with a good grace, but in some fashion or other.

Here comes my Garibaldino again, and with a proposal to go down to Genoa and look at the Italian fleet. I don't suppose that either of us know much of the

subject; and indeed I feel, in my ignorance, that I might be a senior Lord of the Admiralty—but that is only another reason for the inquiry. “One is nothing,” says Mr. Puff, “if he ain’t critical.” So Heaven help the Italian navy under the conjoint commentaries of myself and my friend! Meanwhile, and before we start, one word more of Turin.



## A FRIEND OF GIOBERTI'S:

BEING A REMINISCENCE OF SEVENTEEN YEARS AGO.

HERE I am at the "Feder" in Turin—as dirty a hotel, be it said passingly, as you'll find out of Ireland, and seventeen long years it is since I saw it first. Italy has changed a good deal in the meanwhile—changed rulers, landmarks, systems, and ideas; not so my old acquaintance, the Feder! There's the dirty waiter flourishing his dirtier napkin; and there's the long low-ceilinged *table-d'hôte* room, stuffy and smoky, and suffocating as ever; and there are the little grinning coteries of threes and fours round small tables, soaking their rolls in chocolate, and puffing their "Cavours," with faces as innocent of soap as they were before the war of the liberation. After all, perhaps, I'd have no objection if some friend would cry out, "Why, Con, my boy, you don't look a day older than when I saw you here in '46, I think! I protest you have not changed in the least. What *elixir vitæ* have you swallowed, old fellow? Not a wrinkle, nor a grey hair," and so on. And yet seventeen years taken out of the working part of a man's life—that period that corresponds with the interval between after breakfast, we'll

say, and an hour before dinner—makes a great gap in existence; for I did very little as a boy, being not an early riser, perhaps; and now, in the evening of my days, I have got a theory that a man ought to dine early and never work after it. Though I'm half ashamed, on so short an acquaintance with my reader, to mention a personal incident, I can scarcely avoid—indeed I cannot avoid—relating a circumstance connected with my first visit to the “Hotel Feder.”

I was newly married when I came abroad for a short wedding-tour. The world at that time required new-married people to lay in a small stock of Continental notions, to assist their connubiality and enable them to wear the yoke with the graceful ease of foreigners; and so Mrs. O'D. and I started with one heart, one passport, and—what's not so pleasant—one hundred pounds, to comply with this ordinance. Of course, once over the border—once in France—it was enough. So we took up our abode in a very unpretending little hotel of Boulogne-sur-Mer called “La Cour de Madrid,” where we boarded for the moderate sum of eleven francs fifty centimes per diem—the odd fifty being saved by my wife not taking the post-prandial cup of coffee and rum.

There was not much to see at Boulogne, and we soon saw it. For a week or so Mrs. O'D. used to go out muffled like one of the Sultan's five hundred wives, protesting that she'd surely be recognized; but she grew out of the delusion at last, and discovered that our residence at the Cour de Madrid as effectually screened us from all remark or all inquiry as if we had taken up our abode in the Catacombs.

Now when one has got a large stock of any com-

modity on hand—I don't care what it is—there's nothing so provoking as not to find a market. Mrs. O'D.'s investment was bashfulness. She was determined to be the most timid, startled, modest, and blushing creature that ever wore orange-flowers; and yet there was not a man, woman, or child in the whole town that cared to know whether the act for which she left England was a matrimony or a murder.

“Don't you hate this place, Cornelius?”—she never called me Con in the honeymoon. “Isn't it the dullest, dreariest hole you have ever been in?”

“Not with you.”

“Then don't yawn when you say so. I abhor it. It's dirty, it's vulgar, it's dear.”

“No, no. It ain't dear, my love; don't say dear.”

“Billiards, perhaps, and filthy cigars, and that greenish bitter—anisette, I think they call it—are cheap enough, perhaps, but these are all luxuries I can't share in.”

Here was the cloud no bigger than a man's hand that presaged the first connubial hurricane. A married friend—one of much experience and long-suffering—had warned me of this, saying, “Don't fancy you'll escape, old fellow; but do the way the Ministry do about Turkey—put the evil day off; diplomatize, promise, cajole, threaten a bit if needs be, but postpone;” and, strong with these precepts, I negotiated, as the phrase is, and, with a dash of reckless liberality that I tremble at now as I record it, I said, “You've only to say where—nothing but where to, and I'll take you—up the Rhine, down the Danube, Egypt, the Cataracts.”

“I don't want to go so far,” said she, drily. “Italy will do.”

This was a stunner. I hoped the impossible would have stopped her, but she caught at the practicable, and foiled me.

"There's only one objection," said I, musing.

"And what may that be? Not money, I hope."

"Heaven forbid—no. It's the language. We get on here tolerably well, for the waiter speaks broken English; but in Italy, dearest, English is unknown."

"Let us learn Italian, then. My aunt Groves said I had a remarkable talent for languages."

I groaned inwardly at this, for the same aunt Groves had vouched for a sum of seventeen hundred and odd pounds as her niece's fortune, but which was so beautifully "tied up," as they called it, that neither Chancellor nor Master were ever equal to the task of untying it.

"Of course, dearest, let us learn Italian;" and I thought how I'd crush a junior counsel some day with a smashing bit of Dante.

We started that same night—travelled on day after day—crossed Mont Cenis in a snow-storm, and reached the Feder as way-worn and wretched-looking a pair as ever travelled on an errand of bliss and beatitude.

"In for a penny" is very Irish philosophy, but I can't help that; so I wrote to my brother Peter to sell out another hundred for me out of the "Threes," saying "dear Paulina's health required a little change to a milder climate" (it was snowing when I wrote, and the thermometer over the chimneypiece at 9° Reaumur, with windows that wouldn't shut, and a marble floor without carpet)—"that the balmy air of Italy" (my teeth chattered as I set it down) "would soon restore her; and indeed already she seemed to feel the

change." That she did, for she was crouching over a pan of charcoal ashes, with a railroad wrapper over her shoulders.

It's no use going over what is in every one's experience on first coming south of the Alps—the daily, hourly difficulty of not believing that you have taken a wrong road and got into Siberia; and strangest of all it is to see how little the natives think of it. I declare I often thought soap must be a great refrigerant, and I wish some chemist would inquire into the matter.

"Are we ever to begin this blessed language?" said Mrs. O'D. to me after four days of close arrest—snow still falling, and the thermometer going daily down, down, lower and lower. Now I had made inquiries the day before of the landlord, and learned that he knew of a most competent person, not exactly a regular teacher who would insist upon our going to work in school fashion, but a man of sense and a gentleman—indeed a person of rank and title, with whom the world had gone somewhat badly, and who was at that very moment suffering for his political opinions, far in advance, as they were, of those of his age.

"He's a friend of Gioberti," whispered the landlord in my ear, while his features became animated with the most intense significance. Now, I had never so much as heard of Gioberti, but I felt it would be a deep disgrace to confess it, and so I only exclaimed, with an air of half-incredulity, "Indeed!"

"As true as I'm here," replied he. "He usually drops in about noon to read the *Opinione*, and, if you permit, I'll send him up to you. His name is Count Annibale Castrocara."

I hastened forthwith to Mrs. O'D., to apprise her of the honour that awaited us; repeating, a little *in extenso*, all that the host had said, and finishing with the stunning announcement, "and a friend of Gioberti." Mrs. O'Dowd never flinched under the shock, and, too proud to own her ignorance, she pertly remarked, "I don't think the more of him for that."

I felt that she had beat me, and I sat down abashed and humiliated. Meanwhile Mrs. O'D. retired to make some change of dress; but, reappearing after a while in her smartest morning toilette, and a very coquettish little cap, with cherry-coloured ribbons, I saw what the word Count had done at once.

Just as the clock struck twelve, the waiter flung wide the double doors of our room, and announced as pompously as though for royalty, "Il Signor Conte di Castrocaro," and there entered a tall man slightly stooping in the shoulders, with a profusion of the very blackest hair on his neck and shoulders, his age anything from thirty-five to forty-eight, and his dress a shabby blue surtout, buttoned to the throat and reaching below the knees. He bowed and slid, and bowed again, till he came opposite where my wife sat, and then, with rather a dramatic sort of grace, he lifted her hand to his lips and kissed it. She reddened a little, but I saw she wasn't displeased with the air of homage that accompanied the ceremony, and she begged him to be seated.

I own I was disappointed with the Count, his hair was so greasy, and his hands so dirty, and his general get-up so uncared for; but Mrs. O'D. talked away with him very pleasantly, and he replied in his own broken English, making little grimaces and smiles and

gestures, and some very tender glances, do duty where his parts of speech failed him. In fact, I watched him as a sort of psychological phenomenon, and I arrived at the conclusion that this friend of Gioberti's was a very clever artist.

All was speedily settled for the lessons—hour, terms, and mode of instruction. It was to be entirely conversational, with a little theme-writing, no getting by heart, no irregular verbs, no declensions, no genders. I did beg hard for a little grammar, but he wouldn't hear of it. It was against his "system," and so I gave in.

We began the next day, but the Count ignored me altogether, directing almost all his attentions to Mrs. O'D.; and as I had already some small knowledge of the elementary part of the language, I was just as well pleased that she should come up, as it were, to my level. From this cause I often walked off before the lesson was over, and sometimes, indeed, I skulked it altogether, finding the system, as well as Gioberti's friend, to be an unconscionable bore. Mrs. O'D., on the contrary, displayed an industry I never believed her to possess, and would pass whole evenings over her exercises, which often covered several sheets of letter-paper.

We had now been about five weeks in Turin, when my brother wrote to request I would come back as speedily as I could, that a case in which I held a brief was high in the cause-list, and would be tried very early in the session. I own I was not sorry at the recall. I detested the dreary life I was leading. I hated Turin and its bad feeding and bad theatres, its rough wines and its rougher inhabitants.

"Did you tell the Count we are off on Saturday?" asked I of Mrs. O'D.

"Yes," said she, drily.

"I suppose he is inconsolable," said I, with a sneer.

"He's very sorry we're going, if you mean that, Mr. O'Dowd; and so am I too."

"Well, so am not I; and you may call me a Dutchman if you catch me here again."

"The Count hopes you will permit him to see you. He asked this morning whether he might call on you about four o'clock."

"Yes, I'll see him with sincere pleasure for once," I cried, "since it is to say good-bye to him."

I was in my dressing-room, packing up for the journey, when the Count was announced and shown in. "Excuse me, Count," said I, "for receiving you so informally, but I have a hasty summons to call me back to England, and no time to spare."

"I will, notwithstanding, ask you for some of that time, all precious as it is," said he in French, and with a serious gravity that I had never observed in him before.

"Well, sir," said I, stiffly, "I am at your orders."

It is now seventeen long years since that interview, and I am free to own that I have not even yet attained to sufficient calm and temper to relate what took place. I can but give the substance of our conversation. It is not over-pleasant to dwell on, but it was to this purport:—The Count had come to inform me that, without any intention or endeavour on his part, he had gained Mrs. O'Dowd's affections and won her heart! Yes, much-valued reader, he made this decla-



ration to me, sitting opposite to me at the fire, as coolly and unconcernedly as if he was apologizing for having carried off my umbrella by mistake. It is true, he was most circumstantial in showing that all the ardour was on one side, and that he, throughout the whole adventure, conducted himself as became a Gran Galantuomo, and the friend of Gioberti, whatever that might mean.

My amazement—I might almost call it my stupefaction—at the unparalleled impudence of the man, so overcame me, that I listened to him without an effort at interruption.

“I have come to you, therefore, to-day,” said he, “to give up her letters.”

“Her letters!” exclaimed I; “and she has written to you!”

“Twenty-three times in all,” said he, calmly, as he drew a large black pocket-book from his breast, and took out a considerable roll of papers. “The earlier ones are less interesting,” said he, turning them over. “It is about here, No. 14, that they begin to develop feeling. You see she commences to call me ‘Caro Animale’—she meant to say Annibale, but, poor dear! she mistook. No. 15 is stronger—‘Animale Mio’—the same error; and here, in No. 17, she begins—‘Diletto del mio cuore, quando non ti vedo, non ti sento, il cielo stesso, non mi sorride piu. Il mio Tiranno’—that was *you*.”

I caught hold of the poker with a convulsive grasp, but quick as thought he bounded back behind the table, and drew out a pistol, and cocked it. I saw that Gioberti's friend had his wits about him, and resumed the conversation by remarking that the docu-

ments he had shown me were not in my wife's handwriting.

"Very true," said he; "these, as you will perceive by the official stamp, are sworn copies, duly attested at the Prefettura—the originals are safe."

"And with what object," asked I, gasping—"safe for what?"

"For you, Illustrissimo," said he, bowing, "when you pay me two thousand francs for them."

"I'll knock your brains out first," said I, with another clutch at the poker, but the muzzle of the pistol was now directly in front of me.

"I am moderate in my demands, signor," said he, quietly; "there are men in my position would ask you twenty thousand; but I am a galantuomo——"

"And the friend of Gioberti," added I, with a sneer.

"Precisely so," said he, bowing with much grace.

I will not weary you, dear reader, with my struggles—conflicts that almost cost me a seizure on the brain—but hasten to the result. I beat down the noble Count's demand to one-half, and for a thousand francs I possessed myself of the fatal originals, written unquestionably and indisputably by my wife's hand; and then, giving the Count a final piece of advice never to let me see more of him, I hurried off to Mrs. O'D.

She was out paying some bills, and only arrived a few minutes before dinner-hour.

"I want you, madam, for a moment here," said I, with something of Othello, in the last act, in my voice and demeanour.

"I suppose I can take off my bonnet and shawl first, Mr. O'Dowd," said she, snappishly.

"No, madam; you may probably find that you need them both at the end of our interview."

"What do you mean, sir?" asked she, haughtily.

"This is no time for grand airs or mock dignity, madam," said I, with the tone of the avenging angel. "Do you know these? are these in your hand? Deny it if you can?"

"Why should I deny it? Of course they're mine."

"And you wrote this, and this, and this?" cried I, almost in a scream, as I shook forth one after another of the letters.

"Don't you know I did?" said she, as hotly; "and nothing beyond a venial mistake in one of them!"

"A what, woman? a what?"

"A mere slip of the pen, sir. You know very well how I used to sit up half the night at my exercises?"

"Exercises!"

"Well, themes, if you like better; the Count made me make clean copies of them, with all his corrections, and send them to him every day—here are the rough ones;" and she opened a drawer filled with a mass of papers all scrawled over and blotted. "And now, sir, once more, what do you mean?"

I did not wait to answer her, but rushed down to the landlord. "Where does that Count Castrocara live?" I asked.

"Nowhere in particular, I believe, sir; and for the present he has left Turin—started for Genoa by the diligence five minutes ago. He's a *Gran Galantuomo*, sir," added he, as I stood stupefied.

"I am aware of that," said I, as I crept back to my room to finish my packing.

"Did you settle with the Count?" asked my wife at the door.

"Yes," said I, with my head buried in the trunk.

"And he was perfectly satisfied?"

"Of course he was; he has every reason to be so."

"I am glad of it," said she, moving away; "he had a deal of trouble with those themes of mine. No one knows what they cost him." I could have told what they cost *me*; but I never did, till the present moment.

I need not say with what an appetite I dined on that day, nor with what abject humility I behaved to my wife, nor how I skulked down in the evening to the landlord to apologize for not being able to pay the bill before I left, an unexpected demand having left me short of cash. All these, seventeen years ago as they are, have not yet lost their bitterness, nor have I yet arrived at the time when I can think with composure of this friend of Gioberti.

## THE ITALIANS AND THEIR EMPEROR.

ADMIRAL DALRYMPLE tells us amongst his experiences as a farmer, that he gave twenty pounds for a dunghill, "and he'd give ten more to any one who'd tell him what to do with it." I strongly suspect this is pretty much the case with the Italians as regards their fleet. There it is—at least, there is the beginning of it; and when it shall be complete, where is it to go? what is it to protect? whom to attack?

The very last thing Italians have in their minds is a war with England. If we have not done them any great or efficient service, we have always spoken civilly of them, and bade them a God-speed. But, besides a certain goodwill that they feel for us, they entertain—as a nation with a very extended and ill-protected coast-line ought—a considerable dread of a maritime power that could close every port they possess, and lay some very important towns in ashes.

Now, it is exactly by the possession of a fleet that, in any future war between England and France, these people may be obliged to ally themselves to France. The French will want them in the Mediterranean, and they cannot refuse when called on.

Count Cavour always kept telling our Foreign Office, "A strong Italy is the best thing in the world for you. A strong Italy is the surest of all barriers against France." There may be some truth in the assertion if Italy could spring at once — Minerva fashion—all armed and ready for combat, and stand out as a first-rate power in Europe; but to do this requires years of preparation, long years too; and it is precisely in these years of interval that France can become all-dominant in Italy—the master, and the not very merciful master, of her destinies in everything. France has the guardianship of Italy—with this addition, that she can make the minority last as long as she pleases.

Perhaps my Garibaldian companion has impregnated me with an unreasonable amount of Anti-French susceptibility, for certainly he abuses our dear allies with a zeal and a gusto that does one's heart good to listen to; and I do feel like that honest Bull, commemorated by Mathews, that "I hate prejudice—I hate the French." So it is: these revolutionists, these levellers, these men of the people, are never weary of reviling the French Emperor for being a *parvenu*. Human inconsistency cannot go much farther than this. Not but I perfectly agree with my Garibaldian, that we have all agreed to take the most absurdly exaggerated estimate of the Emperor's ability. Except in some attempts, and not always successful attempts, to carry out the policy and plans of the first Empire, there is really nothing that deserves the name of statesmanship in his career. Wherever he has ventured on a policy, and accompanied it by a prediction, it has been a failure. Witness the proud declaration

of Italy from the Alps to the Adriatic, with its corroboration in the Treaty of Villafranca! The Emperor, in his policy, resembles one of those whist-players who never plan a game, but play trick by trick, and rather hope to win by discovering a revoke than from any honest success of their own hand. It is all the sharp practice of statescraft that he employs: nor has he many resources in cunning. The same dodge that served him in the Crimea he revived at Villafranca. It is always the same ace he has in his sleeve!

The most ardent Imperialist will not pretend to say that he knows his road out of Rome or Mexico, or even Madagascar. For small intrigue, short speeches to deputations, and mock stag-hunts, he has not his superior anywhere. And now, here we are in Genoa, at the Hotel Feder, where poor O'Connell died, and there's no fleet, not a frigate in the port.

"Where are they?"

"At Spezia."

"And where is Spezia?"

The landlord, to whom this question is propounded, takes out of a pigeon-hole of his desk a large map and unfolds it, saying, proudly, "There, sir, that is Spezia—a harbour that could hold Portsmouth, and Plymouth, and Brest, and Cherbourg"—I'm not sure he didn't say Calais—"and yet have room for our Italian fleet, which, in two years' time, will be one of the best in Europe."

"The ships are building?" said I.

"They are."

"And where?"

"In America, at Toulon, and in England."

"None in Italy?"

“Pardon me; there is a corvette on the stocks at Leghorn, and they are repairing a boiler at Genoa. Ah! Signor John Bull, take care; we have iron and coal mines, we have oak and hemp, and tallow and tar. There was a winged lion once that swept the seas before people sang ‘Rule Britannia.’ History is going to repeat itself.”

“Let me be called at eight to-morrow morning, and my coffee be ready by nine.”

“And we shall want a vetturino for Spezia,” added my Garibaldian; “let him be here by eleven.”



## GARIBALDI'S WORSHIPERS.

THE road from Genoa to Spezia is one of the most beautiful in Europe. As the Apennines descend to the sea they form innumerable little bays and creeks, alongside of which the road winds—now coasting the very shore, now soaring aloft on high-perched cliffs, and looking down into deep dells, or to the waving tops of tall pine-trees. Seaward, it is a succession of yellow-stranded bays, land-locked and narrow; and on the land side are innumerable valleys, some waving with horse-chestnut and olive, and others stern and rock-bound, but varying in colour from the bluish-grey of marble to every shade of porphyry.

For several miles after we left Genoa, the road presented a succession of handsome villas, which, neglected and uncared for, and in most part untenanted, were yet so characteristically Italian in all their vastness—their massive style and spacious plan—as to be great ornaments of the scenery. Their gardens, too—such glorious wildernesses of rich profusion—where the fig and the oleander, the vine and the orange, tangle and intertwine—and cactuses, that would form the wonder of our conservatories, are trained into hedges—rows to protect cabbages. My companion pointed out

to me one of these villas on a little jutting promontory of rock, with a narrow bay on one side, almost hidden by the overhanging chestnut-trees. "That," said he, "is the Villa Spinola. It was from there, after a supper with his friend Vecchi, that Garibaldi sailed on his expedition to Marsala. A sort of decent secrecy was maintained as to the departure of the expedition; but the cheers of those on shore, as the boats pulled off, told that the brave buccaneers carried with them the heartfelt good wishes of their countrymen.' Wandering on in his talk from the campaign of Sicily and Calabria, my companion spoke of the last wild freak of Garibaldi and the day of Aspromonte, and finally of the hero's imprisonment at Varignano, in the Gulf of Spezia.

It appeared from his account that the poor wounded sufferer would have fared very ill, had it not been for the provident kindness and care of his friends in England, who supplied him with everything he could want and a great deal he could by no possibility make use of. Wine of every kind, for instance, was largely sent to one who was a confirmed water-drinker, and who, except when obliged by the impure state of the water, never ventured to taste wine. If now and then the zealous anxiety to be of service had its ludicrous side—and packages arrived of which all the ingenuity of the General's followers failed to detect what the meaning might be—there was something very noble and very touching in this spontaneous sympathy of a whole people, and so Garibaldi felt it.

The personal homage of the admirers—the worshippers they might be called—was, however, an infiction that often pushed the patience of Garibaldi's

followers to its limit, and would have overcome the gentle forbearance of any other living creature than Garibaldi himself. They came in shoals. Steamboats and diligences were crammed with them, and the boatmen of Spezia plied as thriving a trade that summer as though Garibaldi were a saint, at whose shrine the devout of all Europe came to worship. In vain obstacles were multiplied and difficulties to entrance invented. In vain it was declared that only a certain number of visitors were daily admitted, and that the number was already complete. In vain the doctors announced that the General's condition was prejudiced, and his feverish state increased, by these continual invasions. Each new arrival was sure to imagine that there was something special or peculiar in his case to make him an exception to any rule of exclusion.

"I knew Garibaldi in Monte Video. You have only to tell him it's Tomkins; he'll be overjoyed to see me." "I travelled with him from Manchester to Bridport; he'll remember me when he sees me; I lent him a wrapper in the train." "I knew his son Menotti when at school." "I was in New York when Garibaldi was a chandler, and I was always asking for his candles;" such and such-like were the claims which would not be denied. At last the infliction became insupportable. Some nights of unusual pain and suffering required that every precaution against excitement should be taken, and measures were accordingly concerted how visitors should be totally excluded. There was this difficulty in the matter, that it might fall at this precise moment some person of real consequence might arrive, or some one whose presence Garibaldi would really have been well pleased to enjoy. All these

considerations were, however, postponed to the patient's safety, and an order was sent to the several hotels where strangers usually stopped to announce that Garibaldi could not be seen.

"There is a story," said my companion, "which I have heard more than once of this period, but for whose authenticity I certainly will not vouch. *Se non vero e' ben trovato*, as regards the circumstance. It was said that a party of English ladies had arrived at the chief hotel, having come as a deputation from some heaven-knows-what association in England, to see the General, and make their own report on his health, his appearance, and what they deemed his prospect of perfect recovery. They had come a very long journey, endured a considerable share of fatigues and certain police attentions, which are not exactly what are called amenities. They had come, besides, on an errand which might warrant a degree of insistence even were they—which they were not—of an order that patiently puts up with denial. When their demand for admission was replied to by a reference to the general order excluding all visitors, they indignantly refused to be classed in such a category. They were not idle tourists, or sensation-hunting travellers. They were a deputation! They came from the Associated Brothers and Sisters of Freedom—from the Branch Committee of the Ear of Crying Nationalities—they were not to be sent away in this light and thoughtless manner.

"The correspondence was animated. It lasted the whole day, and the last-sent epistle of the ladies bore the date of half-past eleven at night. This was a document of startling import; for, after expressing, and not always in the most measured phrase, the indignant dis-

appointment of the writers, it went on to throw out, but in a cloud-like misty sort of way, the terrible consequences that might ensue when they returned to England with the story of their rejection.

“Perhaps this was a mere chance shot; at all events, it decided the battle. The Garibaldians read it as a declaration of strict blockade; and that, from the hour of these ladies’ arrival in England, all supplies would be stopped. Now, as it happened that in by far the greater number of cases, the articles sent found their way to the suite of Garibaldi, not to the General himself, and that cambric shirts and choice hosiery, silk vests, and fur-lined slippers, became the ordinary wear of people to whom such luxuries were not known even by description, it was no mean menace that seemed to declare all this was to have an end.

“One used to sleep in a rich fur dressing-gown; another took a bottle of Arundel’s port at his breakfast; a third was habituating himself to that English liqueur called ‘Punch sauce,’ and so on; and they very reasonably disliked coming back to the dietary supplied by Victor Emmanuel.

“It was in this critical emergency that an inventive genius developed itself. There was amongst the suite of Garibaldi an old surgeon, Ripari, one of the most faithful and attached of all his followers, and who bore that amount of resemblance to Garibaldi which could be imparted by hair, moustache, and beard of the same yellowish-red colour, and eyes somewhat closely set. To put the doctor in bed, and make him personate the General, was the plan—a plan which, as it was meant to save his chief some annoyance, he would have acceded to were it to cost him far more than was now intended.

“To the half-darkened room, therefore, where Ripari lay dressed in his habitual red shirt, propped up by pillows, the deputation was introduced. The sight of the hero was, however, too much for them. One dropped, Madonna-wise, with hands clasped across her bosom, at the foot of his bed; another fainted as she passed the threshold; a third gained the bedside to grasp his hand, and sank down in an ecstasy of devotion to water it with her tears; while the strong-minded woman of the party took out her scissors and cut four several locks off that dear and noble head. They sobbed over him—they blubbered over him—they compared him with his photograph, and declared he was libelled—they showered cards over him to get his autograph; and when, at length, by persuasion, not unassisted by mild violence, they were induced to withdraw, they declared that, for those few moments of ecstasy, they'd have willingly made a pilgrimage to Mecca.

“It is said,” continued my informant, “that Ripari never could be induced to give another representation; and that he declared the luxuries that came from England were dear at the cost of being caressed by a deputation of sympathizers.

“But to Garibaldi himself, the sympathy and the sympathizers went on to the last; and kind wishes and winter-clothing still find their way, with occasionally very tiresome visitors, to the lone rock of Caprera.”

## SOMETHING ABOUT SOLFERINO AND SHIPS.

OUR host of the Feder was not wrong. There was not a word of exaggeration in what he said of Spezia. It could contain all the harbours of France and England, and have room for all the fleets of Europe besides. About seven miles in depth, and varying in width from two to three and a half, it is fissured on every side by beautiful little bays, with deep water everywhere, and not a sunk rock, or shoal, or a bar, throughout the whole extent. Even the sea-opening of the Gulf has its protection by the long coast-line of Tuscany, stretching away to the southward and eastward, so that the security is perfect, and a vessel once anchored within the headlands between Lerici and Palmaria is as safe as in dock.

The first idea of making a great arsenal and naval depot of Spezia came from the Great Emperor. It is said that he was not more than one day there, but in that time he planned the fort which bears his name, and showed how the port could be rendered all but impregnable. Cavour took up the notion, and pursued it with all his wonted energy and activity during the last three or four years of his life. He carried

through the Chamber his project, and obtained a vote for upwards of two millions sterling; but his death, which occurred soon after, was a serious blow to the undertaking; and, like most of the political legacies of the great statesman, the arsenal of Spezia fell into the hands of weak executors.

The first great blunder committed was to accord the chief contract to a bubble company, who sold it, to be again resold; so that it is said something like fifteen changes of proprietary occurred before the first spadeful of earth was turned.

The inordinate jealousy Italians have of foreigners and the fear lest they should "utilize" Italy, and carry away all her wealth with them, has been the source of innumerable mistakes. From this, and their own ignorance of marine engineering, Spezia has already, without the slightest evidence of a commencement, swallowed up above eight millions of francs—the only palpable results being the disfigurement of a very beautiful road, and the bankruptcy of some half-dozen contractors.

There is nothing of which one hears more, than of the readiness and facility with which an Italian learns a new art or a new trade, adapts himself to the use of new tools, and acquires a dexterity in the management of new machinery.

Every newly-come English engineer was struck with this, and expressed freely his anticipations of what so gifted a people might become. After a while, however, if questioned, he would confess himself disappointed—that after the first extraordinary show of intelligence no progress was made—that they seemed marvellous in the initiative, but did nothing after. They



speedily grew weary of whatever they could do or say, no matter in what fashion, and impatiently desired to try something new. The John Bull contentedness to attain perfection in some one branch, and never ask to go beyond it, was a sentiment they could not understand. Every one, in fact, would have liked to do everything, and, as a consequence, do it exceedingly ill.

Assuredly the Count Cavour was the political Marquis de Carabas of Italy. Everything you see was his! No other head seemed to contrive, no other eye to see, nor ear to hear. These railroads—as much for military movements as passenger traffic—this colossal harbour, even to the two iron-clads that lie there at anchor—were all of his designing. They are ugly-looking craft, and have a look of pontoons rather than ships of war; but they are strong, and have a low draught of water, and were intended especially for the attack of Venice just when the Emperor pulled up short at Villafranca. It is not generally known, I believe, but I can vouch for the fact, that so terrified were the Austrians on receiving at Venice the disastrous news of Solferino, that three of the largest steamers of the Austrian Lloyd's Company were brought up, and sunk within twelve hours after the battle. So hurriedly was the whole done that no time was given to remove the steward's stores, and the vessels went down as they stood!

This reminds me of a little incident, for whose exact truth I can guarantee. On the day of the battle of Solferino, the Austrian Envoy at Rome dined with the Cardinal Antonelli. It was a very joyous little dinner, each in the highest spirits—satisfied with the present, and full of hope for the future. The telegram

which arrived at mid-day told that the troops were in motion, and that the artillery fire had already opened. The position was a noble one—the army full of spirit, and all confident that before the sun should set the tide of victory would have turned, and the white legions of the Danube be in hot pursuit of their flying enemy. Indeed, the Envoy came to dinner fortified with a mass of letters from men high in command, all of which assumed as indisputable that the French must be beaten. Of the Italians they never spoke at all.

As the two friends sat over the dessert, they discussed what at that precise moment might be going on over the battle-field. Was the conflict still continuing? Had the French reserves been brought up? Had they, too, been thrown back, beaten and disordered? and where was the fourth corps under the Prince Napoleon? They were forty thousand strong—could they have arrived in time from the Po? All these casualties, and many others, did they talk over, but never once launching a doubt as to the issue, or ever dreaming that the day was not to reverse all the last past, and bring back the Austrians in triumph to Milan.

As they sat, the Prefect of Police was announced and introduced. He came with the list of the persons who were to be arrested and sent to prison—they were one hundred and eighteen, some of them among the first families of Rome—so soon as certain tidings of the victory arrived, and the game of reaction might be safe to begin.

“No news yet, Signor Prefetto! come back at ten,” said the Cardinal.

At ten he presented himself once more. The Cardinal and his friend were taking coffee, but less joyous,

it seemed, than before. At least they looked anxious for news, and started at every noise in the street that might announce new-come tidings. "We have heard nothing since you were here," said the Cardinal. "His Excellency thinks that, at a moment of immense exigency, they may not have immediately bethought them of sending off a despatch."

"There can be no doubt what the news will be when it comes," said the Envoy, "and I'd say make the arrests at once."

"I don't know; I'm not sure. I think I'd rather counsel a little more patience," said the Cardinal. "What if you were to come back at, let us say, midnight." The Prefect bowed, and withdrew.

At midnight it was the same scene, only that the actors were more agitated; the Envoy, at least, worked up to a degree of impatience that bordered on fever; for while he persisted in declaring that the result was certain, he continued to censure, in very severe terms, the culpable carelessness of those charged with the transmission of news. "Ah!" cried he, "there it comes at last!" and a loud summons at the bell resounded through the house.

"A telegram, Eminence," said the servant, entering with the despatch. The Envoy tore it open: there were but two words,—"*Sanglante déroute.*"

The Cardinal took the paper from the hands of the overwhelmed and panic-struck minister, and read it. He stood for a few seconds gazing on the words, not a line or lineament in his face betraying the slightest emotion; then, turning to the Envoy, he said, "Bon soir, adieu, dormir;" and moved away with his usual quick little step, and retired.

And all this time I have been forgetting the Italian fleet, which lies yonder beneath me. The Garibaldi, that they took from the Neapolitans; the Duca di Genova, the Maria Adelaide, and the Regina are there, all screw-propellers of fifty guns each; the Etna, a steam-corvette; and some six or seven old sailing craft, used as school ships; and lastly, the two cuirassée gun-boats, Formidabile and Terribile, and which, with a jealousy imitated from the French, no one is admitted on board of. They are provided with "rams" under the water-line, and have a strange apparatus by which about one-third of the deck towards the bow can be raised, like the lid of a snuff-box leaving the forepart of the ship almost on a level with the water. Under what circumstances, and how, this provision is to be made available, I have not the very vaguest conception.

These vessels were never intended as sea-going ships; and the batteries are an exaggeration of the mistake in the Gloire, for even with the slightest sea the ports must be closed. Besides this defect, they roll abominably, and with a full head of steam on they cannot accomplish seven knots.

Turning from the ships to the harbour I could not help thinking of Sydney Smith's remark on the Reform Club, "I prefer your room to your company;" for, after all, what a sorry stud it is for such a magnificent stable! It is but a beginning, you will say. True enough, and so is everything just now here; but, except the Genoese, the Italians have few real sailors. There are no deep-sea fisheries, and the small craft which creep along close to shore are not the nurseries of seamen. The world, however, has resolved, by a large vote, to be hopeful about Italy; and, of course, she

will have a fleet, as she will have all the trade of the Levant, immensely productive mines, and vast regions of cotton. "What for no?" as Meg Dodds says; but I can't help thinking there are no people in Europe so much alike as the Italians and the Irish; and I ask myself, How is it that every one is so sanguine about the one, and so hopeless about the other? Why do we hear of the capacity and the intelligence of the former, and only of the latter what pertains to their ignorance and their sloth? O unjust generation of men! have not my poor countrymen all the qualities you extol in these same Peninsulars, plus a few others not to be disparaged?

## THE STRANGER AT THE CROCE DI MALTA.

AT the Croce di Malta, where we stopped—the Odessa, we heard, was atrociously bad—we met a somewhat depressed countryman, whose familiarity with place and people was indicated by several little traits. He rebuked the waiter for the salad oil, and was speedily supplied with better; he remonstrated about the wine, and a superior “cru” was served the day following. The book of the arrivals, too, was brought to him each day as he sat down to table, and he grunted out, I remember, in no very complimentary fashion as he read our names, “Nobodies.”

My Garibaldian friend had gone over to Massa, so that I found myself alone with this gentleman on the night of my arrival; for, when the company of the *table-d'hôte* withdrew, he and I were discovered, as the stage-people say, seated opposite to each other at the fire.

It blew hard without; the sea beat loudly on the shingly shore, and even sent some drifts of spray against the windows; while within doors a cheerful wood-fire blazed on the ample hearth, and the low-

ceilinged room did not look a whit the worse that it suggested snugness instead of splendour. I had got my cup of coffee and my cognac on a little table beside me; and while I filled the bowl of my pipe, I be-thought me how cheap and come-at-able are often the materials of our comfort, if one had but the prudence which ignores all display. My companion, apparently otherwise occupied in thought, sat gazing moodily at the fire, and to all seeming unaware of my presence.

"Will my smoking annoy you, sir?" asked I, as I was ready to begin.

"No," said he, without looking up. "I'd like to know where one could go to live nowadays if it did."

"Very true," said I; "the practice is almost universal."

"So is child-murder, so is profane swearing, so is wearing a beard, and poisoning by strychnine."

I was somewhat struck by his enumeration of modern atrocities, and I said, in a tone intended to invite converse, "You are no admirer, then, of what some are fain to call progress?"

He started, and, turning a fierce sharp glance on me, said, "I'd rather you'd touch me with that hot poker there, sir, than hurl that hateful word at my ears. If there's a thing I hate the most, it's what cant—a vile modern slang—calls 'Progress.' You're just in the spot at this moment to mark one of its high successes. Do you know Spezia?"

"Not in the least; never was here before."

"Well, sir, I have known it, I'll not stop to count how many years; but I knew it when that spot yonder, where you see that vile tall chimney, with its tail of murky smoke, was a beautiful little villa, all overgrown

with fig and olive trees. Where you perceive that red glare—the flame of a smelting furnace—there was an orangery. I ought to know the spot well. There, where a summerhouse stood, on that rocky point, they have got a crane and a windlass. Now, turn to this other side. The road you saw to-day, crossed with four main lines, cut up, almost impassable between mud, rubbish, and fallen timber, with swampy excavations on one side and brick-fields on the other, led—ay, and not four years ago—along the margin of the sea, with a forest of chestnuts on the other side, two lines of acacias forming a shade along it, so that in the mid-day of an Italian July you might walk it in delicious shadow. In the Gulf itself the whole scene was mirrored, and not a headland, nor rock, nor cliff, that was not pictured below. It was, in a word, a little paradise; nor were the people all unworthy of their lovely birthplace. They were a quiet, civil, obliging, simple-minded set—if not inviting strangers to settle amongst them, never rude or repelling to them; equitable in dealings, and strange to all disturbance or outrage. What they are now is no more easy to say than what a rivulet is when a torrent has carried away its banks and swept its bed. Two thousand navvies, the outswEEPINGS of jails and the galleys, have come down to the works; a horde of contractors, sub-contractors, with the several staffs of clerks, inspectors, and such-like, have settled on the spot, ravaging its beauty, uprooting its repose, vulgarizing its simple rusticity, and converting the very gem of the Mediterranean into a dreary swamp—a vast amphitheatre, where liberated felons, robbing contractors, foul miasma, centrifugal pumps, and tertian fevers, fight all day for the mastery.



And for what?—for what? To fill the pockets of knavish ministers and thieving officials—to make an arsenal that will never be finished, for a fleet that will never be built.”

My companion, it is needless to say, was no optimist; but the strange point was, that while he was unsparing of his censure on Cavour and the “Piedmontese party,” he was no apologist for the old state of things in Italy. So far from it, that he launched out freely in attack of Papal bigotry, superstition, and corruption, and freely corroborated our own Premier’s assertions, by calling the Pope’s the “worst government in Europe.” In fact, he showed very clearly that the smaller states of Italy were well or ill administered in the direct ratio that they admitted or rejected Papal interference—Modena being the worst, and Tuscany the best of them.

Though he certainly knew his subject so far as details went—for he not merely knew Italy well in its several provinces, but he understood the characters and tempers of the leading Italians—yet, with all this, I could not help asking him, If he was not satisfied with the old Italy, and yet did not like the new, what he did wish for?

“I have my theory on the subject, sir,” said he; “nor am I the less enamoured of it that I never yet met the man I could induce to adopt it.”

“It is no worse than the fate of all discoverers, I suppose,” said I; “Columbus saw land two whole days before his followers.”

“Columbus was a humbug, sir, and no more discovered America than you did.”

I was so afraid of a digression here that I stammered

out a partial concurrence, and asked for some account of his project for Italy.

“ I’d unite her to Greece, sir. These people, with the exception of a small circle around Rome, are not Latins—they are Greeks. I’d bring them back to the parent stock, who are the only people in Europe with craft and subtlety to rule them. Take my word for it, sir, they’d not cheat the ‘Hellenes’ as they do the French and the English ; and as the only true way to reform a nation is to make vice unprofitable, I’d unite them to a race that could outrogue and outwit them on every hand. What is it, I ask you, makes of the sluggish, indolent, careless Irishman, the prudent, hard-working, prosperous fellow you see him in the States ? Simply the fact, that the craft by which he outwitted John Bull no longer serves him. The Yankee is too shrewd to be jockeyed by it, and Paddy must use his hands instead of his head. The same would happen with the Italian. Give him a Greek master, and you’ll see what he’ll become.”

“ But the Greeks, after all,” said I, “ do not present such a splendid example of order and prosperity. They are little better than brigands.”

“ And don’t you see why ? ” broke he in. “ Have you ever looked into a gambling-house when the company had no ‘ pigeon,’ and were obliged to play against each other. They have lost all decency—all the semblance of good manners and decorum. Whatever little politeness they had put on to impose upon the outsider was gone, and there they were in all the naked atrocity of their bad natures. It is thus you see the Greeks. You have dropped in upon them unfairly ; you have invaded a privacy they had hoped might be respected.

Give them a nation to cheat, however ; let the pigeon be introduced, and you'll not see a better bred and a more courtly people in Europe."

That they had great social qualities he proceeded to show from a number of examples. They were, in fact, in the world of long ago what the French are to our own day, and there was no reason to suppose that the race had lost its old characteristics. According to my companion's theory, Force had only its brief interval of domination anywhere ; the superior intelligence was sure to gain the upper hand at last ; and we, in our opposition to this law, were simply retarding an inevitable tendency of nature—protracting the fulfilment of what we could not prevent.

I got him back from these speculation to speak of himself, and he told me some experiences which will, perhaps, account for the displeasure with which he regards the changed fortunes of Spezia. I shall give his narrative as nearly as I can in his own words, and in a chapter to itself.

## THE STRANGE MAN'S SORROW.

“WHEN I first knew Spezia, it was a very charming spot to pass the summer in. The English had not found it out. A bottle of Harvey sauce or a copy of *Galignani* had never been seen here; and the morning meal, which now figures in my bill as ‘Déjeuner complet—two francs,’ was then called ‘Coffee,’ and priced twopence. I used to pass my day in a small sail-boat, and in my evenings I played halfpenny whist with the judge and the commander of the forces and a retired envoy, who, out of a polite attention to me as a stranger, agreed to play such high stakes during my sojourn at the Baths.

“They were excellent people, of unblemished character, and a politeness I have rarely seen equalled. Nobody could sneeze without the whole company rising to wish him a long and prosperous life, or a male heir to his name; and as for turning the trump card without a smile and a bow all round to the party, it was a thing unheard of.

“I thought if I could only secure a spot to live in in such an Arcadia, it would be charming, but this was a great difficulty. No one had any accommodation more than he wanted for himself. The very

isolation that gave the place its charm excluded all speculation, and not a house was to be had. In my voyagings, however, around the Gulf, I landed one day at a little inlet, surrounded with high lands, and too small to be called a bay, and there, to my intense astonishment, I discovered a small villa. It looked exactly like the houses one sees in a toy-shop, and where you take off the roof to peep in and see how neatly the stairs are made and the rooms divided; but there was a large garden at one side and an orangery at the other, and it all looked the neatest and prettiest little thing one ever saw off the boards of a minor theatre. I drew my boat on shore and strolled into the garden, but saw no one, not even a dog. There was a deep well with a draw-bucket, and I filled my gourd with ice-cold water; and then plucking a ripe orange that had just given me a bob in the eye, I sat down to eat it. While I was engaged, I heard a wicket open and shut, and saw an old man, very shabbily dressed, and with a mushroom straw hat, coming towards me. Before I could make excuses for my intrusion, he had welcomed me to Pertusola—‘The Nook,’ in English—and invited me to step in and have a glass of wine.

“I took him for the steward or *fattore*, and acceded, not sorry to ask some questions about the villa and its owner. He showed me over the house, explaining with much pride how a certain kitchen-range came from England, though nobody ever knew the use of it, but it was all very comfortable. The silk-worms and dried figs and salt-fish occupied more space, and contributed more odour, perhaps, than a correct taste would have approved of. Yet there were capabilities

—great capabilities ; and so, before I left, I took it from the old gentleman in the rusty costume, who turned out to be the proprietor, a marquis, the ‘ commendatore ’ of I don’t know what order, and various other dignities beside, all recited and set forth in the lease.

“I suppose I have something of Robinson Crusoe in my nature, for I loved the isolation of this spot immensely. It wasn’t an island, but it was all but an island. Towards the land, two jutting promontories of rock denied access to anything not a goat ; the sea in front ; an impenetrable pine-wood to the rear : and there I lived so happily, so snugly, that even now, when I want a pleasant theme to doze over beside my wood-fire of an evening, I just call up Pertusola, and ramble once again through its olive groves, or watch the sunset tints as they glow over the Carara mountains.

“I smartened the place up wonderfully, within doors and without. I got flowers, roots, and annuals, and slips of geraniums, and made the little plateau under my drawing-room window a blaze of tulips and ranunculuses, so that the Queen—she was at Spezia for the bathing—came once to see my garden, as one of the show spots of the place. Her Majesty was as gracious as only royalty knows how to be, and so were all her suite in their several ways ; but there was one short, fat, pale-faced man, with enormous spectacles, who, if less polite than the rest, was ten times as inquisitive. He asked about the soil, and the drainage, the water and its quality—was it a spring—did it ever fail—and when, and how ? Then as to the bay itself, was it sheltered, and from what winds ? What the

anchorage was like—mud—and why mud? And when I said there was always a breeze even in summer, he eagerly pushed me to explain, why? and I did explain that there was a cleft or gully between the hills, which acted as a sort of conductor to the wind; and on this he went back to verify my statement, and spent some time poking about, examining everything, and stationing himself here and there on points of rock, to experience the currents of air. ‘You are right,’ said he, as he got into his boat, ‘quite right; there is a glorious draught here for a smelting-furnace.’

“I thought it odd praise at the time, but before six months I received notice to quit.

“Pertusola had been sold to a lead company, one of the directors having strongly recommended the site as an admirable harbour, with good water, and a perpetual draught of wind, equal to a blast-furnace.”

Looking at the dress-coat in which you once captivated dinner-parties, on a costermonger—seeing the strong-boned hunter that has carried you over post and rail, in a cab,—are sore trials; but nothing, according to my companion’s description, to the desecration of your house and home by its conversion into a factory. Such an air of the “Inferno,” too, pervades the smelting-house, with its lurid glow, its roar, its flash, and its furious heat, that I could readily forgive him the passionate warmth with which he described it.

“They had begun that chimney, sir,” cried he, “before I got out of the house. I had to cross on a plank over a pit before my door, where they were riddling the ore. The morning I left, I covered my eyes, not to see the barbaric glee with which they destroyed all around, and I left the place for ever.

I crossed over the Gulf, and I took that house you can see on the rocky point called Marola. It had no water; there was no depth to anchor in; and not a breath of air could come at it except in stillness. No more terrors of smelting-house here, thought I. Well, sir, I must be brief; the whole is too painful to dwell on. I hadn't been eight months there when a little steamer ran in one morning, and four persons in plain clothes landed from her, and pottered about the shore—I thought looking for anemones. At last they strolled up to my house, and asked permission to have a look at the Gulf from my terrace. I acceded, and in they came. They were all strangers but one, and who do you think he was? The creature with the large spectacles! My blood ran cold when I saw him.

“‘You used to live yonder, if I mistake not,’ said he to me, coolly.

“‘Yes, and I might have been living there still,’ replied I, ‘if it had not been for the prying intrusion of a stranger, to whom I was weak enough to be polite.’

“He never noticed my taunt in the least, but, calmly opening the window, passed out upon the terrace, The others speedily gathered around him, and I saw that he knew the whole place as if it had been his bedroom; for not only did he describe the exact measurements between various points, but the depth of water, the character of the bottom, the currents, and the prevailing winds. He went on, besides, to show how, by running out a pier here, and a breakwater there—by filling up this, and deepening that—safe anchorage could be secured in all weathers; while the



headlands could be easily fortified, and 'at a moderate cost,' I quote himself, 'of say twenty-two or three millions of francs, while a fort erected on the island there would command the whole entrance.'

"'And who, in the name of all Utopia, wants to force it?' cried I; for, as they talked so openly, I thought I might interpose as frankly.

"He never seemed to resent my remark as obtrusive, but said quietly, 'Who knows? the French, perhaps—perhaps your own people one of these days.'

"I'd like to have said, but I didn't, 'We could walk in and walk out here, with our iron-clads, as coolly as a man goes out in the rain with a mackintosh.'

"They remained fully an hour, talking as freely as if I was born deaf and dumb. At last they arose to leave, and the owl-faced man—he looked exactly like an owl—said, with a little grin, 'We're going to disturb you again.'

"'How so?' cried I; 'you can't smelt lead here.'

"'No, but we're going to make an arsenal. Where you stand now will be a receiving-dock, and that garden of yours a patent slip. You'll have to clear out before the New Year.'

"'Who is he? who is that with the spectacles?' asked I of one of the servants, who waited outside with cloaks and umbrellas.

"'That's the Conte di Cavour,' said the fellow, haughtily; and thus was the whole murder out at once. They turned me out, sir, in two months, and I never ventured to take a lease of a place till he died. After that event, I purchased a little spot on the island of Tino yonder, and built myself a cottage. They could

neither smelt metal nor build a ship there, and I hugged myself at the thought of safety. But, would you believe it? last week—only last week—his successor, in rummaging over Cavour's papers in the Foreign Office, comes upon a packet labelled 'Spezia,' and discovers a memorandum in these words, 'The English Admiral, at dinner to-day, laughed at the idea of defending the mouth of the Gulf from the island. He said the entrance should be two-thirds closed by a breakwater, and a strong fort *à fleur d'eau* built on Tino. I have thought of it all night; he is perfectly right, and I'll do it;' and here, sir," said my companion, drawing a paper from his pocket, "is a 'sommation' from the minister to surrender my holding on Tino, receiving a due compensation for the same, and once more betake myself, heaven knows where; for, though the great Count Cavour is dead and gone, his grand intentions are turning up every day, out of drawers and pigeon-holes; and I shrewdly suspect that neither Pio Nono nor myself will live to see the last of them."

## ITALIAN LAW AND JUSTICE.

My Garibaldian friend has returned, but only to bid me good-bye and be off again. The Government, it would seem, are rather uneasy as to the movements of the "Reds," and quietly intimated to my friend that they were sure he had something particular to do—some urgent private affairs—at Geneva; and, like the well-bred dog in the story, he does not wait for any further suggestions, but goes at once.

He revenged himself, however, all the time at breakfast, by talking very truculently before the waiters of what would happen when Garibaldi took the field again, and how miserably small Messrs. Ratazzi & Co. would look under the circumstances. Indeed, as he warmed with his subject, he went the length of declaring that, without a very ample apology for the events of Aspromonte, he did not believe Garibaldi would consent to take Venice, or drive the French out of Rome.

With a spirit of tantalizing, he prolonged this same breakfast for upwards of two hours, during which the officer of the gendarmerie came and went, and came again, very eager to see him depart, but evidently with instructions neither to molest nor interfere with him.

"Just look at that beggar," cried the Garibaldian; "if he has come in here once during the last hour, he has come a dozen times, and all on my account! And I mean to smoke three 'Cavours' over my anisetto before I leave. Waiter, tell the vetturino he'll have plenty of time to throw a feed to his cattle before I start. You know," added he, "if I was disposed to be troublesome, I'd not budge: I'd write up to Turin to the Legation and claim British protection; and I'd have these fellows on the hip, for they stupidly gave me a reason for my expulsion. They said I was conspiring. Now I could say, Prove it; and if we only went to law, it would take ten or twelve years to decide it."

My companion now went on to show that, by a small expenditure of money and a very ordinary exercise of ingenuity, a lawsuit need never end in Italy. "First of all you could ask the opposite party, Who was his advocate? and on his naming him, you could immediately set to work to show that this man was a creature so vile and degraded, no man with the commonest pretension to honesty would dream of employing him. The history of his father could be adduced, and any private little anecdotes of his mother would find a favourable opportunity for mention. Though a mere skirmish, if judiciously managed this will occupy a week or two, and at the same time serve to indicate that you mean to show fight; for by this time the 'Legale's' blood will be up, and he is certain to make reprisals on *your* man, so that for a month or so you and the other principal are in the position of men who, having come out to fight a duel, are first gratified with the spectacle of a row between the seconds. However, at last it is arranged that the lawyers are worthy of

each other ; and the next step is to demand the names of all the witnesses. This opens a campaign of unlimited duration, for, as nobody is rash enough to trust himself or his cause to real and *bonâ-fide* testimony, witnesses are usually selected amongst the most astute and ready-witted persons of your acquaintance."

"Oh," cried I, "this is a little too strong, isn't it?"

"Let me give you an instance," said he, good-humouredly, and not in the least disposed to be displeased with my expression of distrust. "Some time back an American gentleman took up his abode for some weeks on the Chiaja at Naples, and in the same house there lived an Italian, with whom, from frequently meeting on the stairs and corridors, a sort of hat-touching acquaintance had grown up. At length one day, as the American was passing hastily out, the Italian accosted him with a courteous bow and smile, and said, 'When will it be your perfect convenience, signor, to repay me that little loan of two hundred ducats it was my happy privilege to have lent you last month?'

"The American, astounded as he was, had yet patience to inquire whether he had not mistaken him for another.

"The other smiled somewhat reproachfully, as he said, 'I trust, signor, you are not disposed to ignore the obligation. You are the gentleman who lives, I believe, on the second floor left?'

"'Very true, I do live there, and I owe you nothing. I never borrowed a carlino from you—I never spoke to you before ; and if you ever take the liberty to speak to me again I'll knock you down.'

"The Italian smiled again, not so blandly, perhaps,

but as significantly, and saying, 'We shall see,' bowed and retired.

"The American thought little more of the matter till, going to the Prefecture to obtain his *visé* for Rome, he discovered that his passport had been stopped, and a detainer put upon him for this debt. He hastened at once to his Minister, who referred him to the law-adviser of the Legation for counsel. The man of law looked grave; he neither heeded the angry denunciations of the enraged Yankee, nor his reiterated assurances that the whole was an infamous fraud. He simply said, 'The case is difficult, but I will do my best.' After the lapse of about a week, a message came from the Prefect to say that the stranger's passport was at his service whenever he desired to have it.

"'I knew it would be so!' cried the American, as he came suddenly upon his lawyer in the street. 'I was certain that you were only exaggerating the difficulty of a matter that must have been so simple; for, as I never owed the money, there was no reason why I should pay it.'

"'It was a case for some address, notwithstanding,' said the other, shaking his head.

"'Address! fiddlestick! It was a plain matter of fact, and needed neither skill nor cunning. You of course showed that this fellow was a stranger to me—that we had never interchanged a word till the day he made this rascally demand?'

"'I did nothing of the kind, sir. If I had put in so contemptible a plea, you would have lost your cause. What I did was this: I asked what testimony he could adduce as to the original loan, and he gave me the

name of one witness, a certain Count well known in this city, who was at breakfast with him when you called to borrow this money, and who saw the pieces counted out and placed in your hand.'

" 'You denounced this fellow as a perjurer?'

" 'Far from it, sir. I respect the testimony of a man of station and family, and I would not insult the feelings of the Count by daring to impugn it; but as the plaintiff had called only one witness to the loan, I produced two just as respectable, just as distinguished, who saw you repay the debt! You are now free; and remember, sir, that wherever your wanderings lead you, never cease to remember that, whatever be our demerits at Naples, at least we can say with pride, The laws are administered with equal justice to all men!'

The entrance of the gendarme at this moment cut short the question I was about to ask, whether I was to accept the story as a fact or as a parable.

"Here he comes again. Only look at the misery in the fellow's face! and you see he has his orders evidently enough; and he dare not hurry me. I think I'll have a bath before I start."

"It is scarcely fair, after all," said I. "I suppose he wants to get back to his one-o'clock dinner."

"I could no more feel for a gendarme than I could compassionate a scorpion. Take the best-natured fellow in Europe—the most generous, the most trustful, the most unsuspecting—make a brigadier of Gendarmerie of him for three months, and he'll come out scarcely a shade brighter than the veriest rascal he has handcuffed! Do you know what our friend yonder is at now?"

"No. He appears to be trying to take a stain out of one of his yellow gauntlets."

"No such thing. He is noting down your features—taking a written portrait of you, as the man who sat at breakfast with me on a certain morning of a certain month. Take my word for it, some day or other, when you purchase a hat too tall in the crown, or you are seen to wear your whiskers a trifle too long or bushy, an intimation will reach you at your hotel, that the Prefect would like to talk with you; the end of which will be the question, 'Whether there is not a friend you are most anxious to meet in Switzerland, or if you have not an uncle impatient to see you at Trieste?' And yet," added he, after a pause, "the Piedmontese are models of liberality and legality in comparison with the officials in the south. In Sicily, for instance, the laws are more corruptly administered than in Turkey. I'll tell you a case, which was, however, more absurd than anything else. An English official, well known at Messina, and on the most intimate terms with the Prefect, came back from a short shooting excursion he had made into the interior, half frantic with the insolence of the servants at a certain inn. The proprietor was absent, and the waiter and the cook—not caring, perhaps, to be disturbed for a single traveller—had first refused flatly to admit him; and afterwards, when he had obtained entrance, treated him to the worst of food, intimating at the same time it was better than he was used to, and plainly giving him to understand that on the very slightest provocation they were prepared to give him a sound thrashing. Boiling over with passion, he got back to Messina, and hastened to recount his misfortunes to his friend in power.



“ ‘Where did it happen?’ asked the hard-worked Prefect, with fully enough on his hands without having to deal with the sorrows of Great Britons.

“ ‘At Spalla de Monte.’

“ ‘When?’

“ ‘On Wednesday last, the 23rd.’

“ ‘What do you want me to do with them?’

“ ‘To punish them, of course.’

“ ‘How—in what way?’

“ ‘How do I know? Send them to jail.’

“ ‘For how long?’

“ ‘A month if you can—a fortnight at least.’

“ ‘What are the names?’ asked the Prefect, who all this time continued to write, filling up certain blanks in some printed formula before him.

“ ‘How should I know their names? I can only say that one was the cook, the other the waiter.’

“ ‘There!’ said the Prefect, tossing two sheets of printed and written-over paper towards him—‘there! tell the landlord to fill in the fellows’ names and surnames, and send that document to the Podesta. They shall have four weeks, and with hard labour.’

“The Englishman went his way rejoicing. He despatched the missive, and felt his injuries were avenged.

“Two days after, however, a friend dropped in, and in the course of conversation mentioned that he had just come from Spalla de Monte, where he had dined so well and met such an intelligent waiter; ‘which, I own,’ said he, ‘surprised me, for I had heard of their having insulted some traveller last week very grossly.’

“The Englishman hurried off to the Prefecture.

'We are outraged, insulted, laughed at!' cried he; 'those fellows you ordered to prison are at large. They mock your authority and despise it.'

"A mounted messenger was sent off at speed to bring up the landlord to Messina, and he appeared the next morning, pale with fear and trembling. He owned that the Prefect's order had duly reached him, that he had understood it thoroughly; 'but, Eccellenza,' said he, crying, 'it was the shooting season; people were dropping in every day. Where was I to find a cook or a waiter? I must have closed the house if I parted with them; so, not to throw contempt on your worship's order, I sent two of the stablemen to jail in their place, and a deal of good it will do them.'"

While I was laughing heartily at this story, my companion turned towards the gendarme and said, "Have you made a note of his teeth? You see they are tolerably regular, but one slightly overlaps the other in front."

"Signor Generale," said the other, reddening, "I'll make a note of *your* tongue, which will do quite as well."

"Bravo!" said the Garibaldian; "better said than I could have given you credit for. I'll not keep you any longer from your dinner. Will you bear me company," asked he of me, "as far as Chiavari? It's a fine day, and we shall have a pleasant drive."

I agreed, and we started.

The road was interesting, the post-horses which we took at Borghetto went well, and the cigars were good, and somehow we said very little to each other as we went.

"This is the real way to travel," said my com-

panion; "a man to smoke with, and no bother of talking; there's Chiavari in the hollow."

I nodded, and never spoke.

"Are you inclined to come on to Genoa?"

"No."

And soon after we parted—whether ever to meet again or not is not so easy to say, nor of very much consequence to speculate on.

## R. N. F., THE GREAT CHEVALIER D'INDUSTRIE OF OUR DAY.

I WAS struck the other day by an account of an application made to the Lord Mayor of London by a country clergyman, to give, as a warning to others, publicity to a letter he had just received from the East. The clergyman, it seems, had advertised in the *Times* for pupils, and gave for address a certain letter of the Greek alphabet. To this address there came in due time an answer from a gentleman, dated Constantinople, stating that he was an Anglo-Indian on his way to England, to place his two sons in an educational establishment; but that having, by an excursion to Jerusalem, exhausted his immediate resources, he was obliged to defer the prosecution of his journey till the arrival of some funds he expected from India—certain to arrive in a month or two. Not wishing, however, to delay the execution of his project, and being satisfied with the promises held forth by the advertiser, he purposed placing his sons under his care, and to do so, desired that forty pounds might be remitted to him at once, to pay his journey to England, for which convenience he, the writer, would not alone be obliged, but

also extend his patronage to the lender, by recommending him to his friend Sir Hugh Rose, who was himself desirous of sending his sons to be educated in England. The address of a banker was given to whom the money should be remitted, and an immediate reply requested, or "application should be made in some other quarter."

Now, the clergyman did not answer this strange appeal, but he inserted another advertisement, changing, however, the symbol by which he was to be addressed, and appearing in this way to be a different person. To this new address there came another letter, perfectly identical in style and matter: the only change was, that the writer was now at the Hotel de la Reine d'Angleterre at Buda; but all the former pledges of future protection were renewed, as well as the request for a prompt reply, or "application will be made in another quarter."

The clergyman very properly laid the matter before the Lord Mayor, who, with equal propriety, stamped the attempt as the device of a swindler, against which publicity in the newspapers was the best precaution. The strangest thing of all, however, was, that nobody appeared to know the offender; nor was there in the *Times*, or in the other newspapers where the circumstances were detailed, one single surmise as to the identity of this ingenious individual. It is the more singular, since this man is a specialty—an actual personification of some of the very subtlest rogueries of the age we live in!

If any of my readers can recall a very remarkable exposure the *Times* newspaper made some ten or twelve years ago, of a most shameful fraud practised

upon governesses, by which they were induced to deposit a sum equivalent to their travelling expenses from England to some town on the Continent, as a guarantee to the employer, they will have discovered the gentleman with the two sons to be educated—the traveller in Syria, the friend of Sir Hugh Rose, the Anglo-Indian who expects eight hundred pounds in two months, but has a present and pressing necessity for forty.

The governess fraud was ingenious. It was done in this way : An advertisement appeared in the *Times*, setting forth that an English gentleman, travelling with his family abroad, wanted a governess—the conditions liberal, the requirements of a high order. The family in question, who mixed with the very best society on the Continent, required that the governess should be a lady of accomplished manners, and one in every respect qualified for that world of fashion to which she would be introduced as a member of the advertiser's family. The advertiser, however, found that all the English ladies who had hitherto filled this situation in his family had, through the facilities thus presented them of entrance into life, made very advantageous marriages ; and to protect himself against the loss entailed by the frequent call on him for travelling expenses—bringing out new candidates for the hands of princes and grand-dukes—he proposed that the accepted governess should deposit with him a sum—say fifty pounds—equivalent to the charge of the journey ; and which, if she married, should be confiscated to the benefit of her employer.

The scheme was very ingenious ; it was, in fact, a lottery in which you only paid for your ticket when you had drawn a prize. Till the lucky number turned

up, you never parted with your money. Was there ever any such bribe held forth to a generation of unmarried and marriageable women? There was everything that could captivate the mind: the tour on the Continent—the family who loved society and shared it so generously—the father so parental in his kindness, and who evidently gave the governess the benediction of a parent on the day she may have married the count; and all secured for what—for fifty pounds? No; but for the deposit, the mere storing up of fifty pounds in a strong box; for if, after two years, the lady neither married nor wished to remain, she could claim her money and go her way.

The success was immense; and as the advertiser wrote replies from different towns to different individuals, governesses arrived at Brussels, at Coblenz, at Frankfort, at Mayence, at Munich, at Nice—and heaven knows where besides—whose deposits were lodged in the hands of N. F. That ingenious gentleman straightway departed, and was no more seen, and only heard of when the distress and misery of these unhappy ladies had found their way to the public press. The *Times*, with all that ability and energy it knows how to employ, took the matter up, published some of the statements—very painful and pathetic they were—of the unfortunate victims of this fraud, and gave more than one “leader” to its exposure. Nor was the Government wanting in proper activity. Orders were sent out from the Foreign Office to the different legations and consulates abroad, to warn the police in the several districts against the machinations of this artful scoundrel, should he chance to be in their neighbourhood. Even more distinct instructions were sent out

to certain legations, by which R. N. F. could be arrested on charges that would at least secure his detention till the law officers had declared what steps could be taken in his behalf. It was not the age of photography, but a very accurate description of the man's appearance and address was furnished, and his lofty stature, broad chest, burly look, and bushy whiskers—a shade between red and auburn—were all duly posted in each Chancellerie of the Continent.

For a while it seemed as if he lived in retirement—his late success enabled this to be an “elegant retirement”—and it is said that he passed it on the Lake of Como, in a villa near that of the once Queen Caroline. There are traditions of a distinguished stranger—a man of rank and a man of letters—who lived there estranged from all the world, and deeply engaged in the education of his two sons. One of these youths, however, not responding to all this parental devotion, involved himself in some scrape, fled from his father's roof, and escaped into Switzerland. N. F., as soon as he could rally from the first shock of the news, hastened after, to bring him back, borrowing a carriage from a neighbouring nobleman in his haste. With this he crossed the frontier at Chiasso, but never to come back again. The coachman, indeed, brought tidings of the sale of the equipage, which the illustrious stranger had disposed of, thus quitting a neighbourhood he could only associate with a sorrowful past, and a considerable number of debts into the bargain. Another blank occurs here in history, which autobiography alone perhaps could fill. It would be unfair and unphilosophical to suppose that because we cannot trace him he was inactive: we might as reason-



ably imply that the moon ceased to move when we lost sight of her. At all events, towards the end of autumn of that last year of the war in the Crimea, a stout, well-dressed, portly man, with an air of considerable assurance, swaggered into the Chancellerie of her Majesty's Legation at Munich, notwithstanding the representations of the porter, who would, if he had dared, have denied him admittance, and asked, in a voice of authority, if there were no letters there for Captain F. The gentleman to whom the question was addressed was an attaché of the Legation, and at that time in "charge" of the mission, the Minister being absent. Though young in years, F. could scarcely, in the length and breadth of Europe, have fallen upon one with a more thorough insight into every phase and form of those mysteries by which the F. category of men exist. Mr. L. was an actual amateur in this way, and was no more the man to be angry with F. for being a swindler, than with Ristori for being Medea, or Macready being Macbeth. Not that he had the slightest suspicion at the time of F.'s quality, as he assured him that there were no letters for that name.

"How provoking!" said the Captain, as he bit his lip. "They will be so impatient in England," muttered he to himself, "and I know Sidney Herbert is sure to blame *me*." Then he added aloud, "I am at a dead-lock here. I have come from the Crimea with despatches, and expected to find money here to carry me on to England; and these stupid people at the War Office have forgotten all about it. Is it not enough to provoke a saint?"

"I don't know; I never was a saint," said the impassive attaché.

"Well, it's trying to a sinner," said F., with a slight laugh; for he was one of those happy-natured dogs who are not indifferent to the absurd side of even their own mishaps. "How long does the post take to England?"

"Three days."

"And three back—that makes six; a week—an entire week."

"Omitting Sunday," said the grave attaché, who really felt an interest in the other's dilemma.

"All I can say is, it was no fault of mine," cried F., after a moment. "If I am detained here through their negligence, they must make the best excuse they can. Have you got a cigar?" This was said with his eyes fixed on a roll of cubans on the table.

"Take one," said the other.

"Thanks," said F., as he selected three. "I'll drop in to-morrow, and hope to have better luck."

"How much money do you want?" asked Mr. L.

"Enough to carry me to London."

"How much is that?"

"Let me see. Strasbourg—Paris, a day at Paris; Cowley might detain me two days: fifteen or twenty pounds would do it amply."

"You shall have it."

"All right," said F., who walked to the fire, and, lighting his cigar, smoked away; while the other took some notes from a table-drawer and counted them.

"Shall I give you a formal receipt for this?" asked F.

"You can tell them at the Office," said L., as he dipped his pen into the ink, and continued the work he had been previously engaged in. F. said a few civil

words—the offhand gratitude of a man who was fully as much in the habit of bestowing as of receiving favours, and withdrew. L. scarcely noticed his departure ; he was deep in his despatch, and wrote on. At length he came to the happy landing-place, that spot of rest for the weary foot—"I have the honour to be, my Lord," and he arose and stood at the fire.

As L. smoked his cigar he reflected, and as he reflected he remembered ; and, to refresh his memory, he took out some papers from a pigeon-hole, and at last finding what he sought, sat down to read it. The document was a despatch, dated a couple of years back, instructing H.M.'s representative at the Court of Munich to secure the person of a certain N. F., and hold him in durance till application should be made to the Bavarian Government for his extradition and conveyance to England. Then followed a very accurate description of the individual—his height, age, general looks, voice, and manner—every detail of which L. now saw closely tallied with the appearance of his late visitor.

He pondered for a while over the paper, and then looked at his watch. It was five o'clock ! The first train to Augsburg was to start at six. There was little time, consequently, to take the steps necessary to arrest a person on suspicion ; for he should first of all have to communicate with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who should afterwards back his application to the Prefect of Police. The case was one for detail, and for what the Germans insist upon, much writing—and there was very little time to do it in. L., however, was not one to be easily defeated. If baffled in one road, he usually found out another. He therefore wrote

a brief note to the Minister, stating that he might require his assistance at a later hour of the evening, and at a time not usually official. This done, he despatched another note to Captain R. F., saying familiarly it was scarcely worth while trying to catch the mail-train that night, and that perhaps instead he would come over and take a *tête-à-tête* dinner with him at the Legation.

F. was overjoyed as he read it! No man ever felt a higher pleasure in good company, nor knew better how to make it profitable. If he had been asked to choose, he would infinitely rather have had the invitation to dine than the twenty pounds he had pocketed in the morning. The cognate men of the world—and all members of the diplomatic career are to a certain extent in this category—were in F.'s estimation the "trump cards" of the pack, with which he could "score tricks" innumerable, and so he accepted at once; and, in a very few minutes after his acceptance, made his appearance in a correct dinner-dress and a most unexceptionable white tie.

"Couldn't refuse that pleasant offer of yours, L." (he was familiar at once, and called him L.), "and here I am!" said he, as he threw himself into an easy-chair with all the bland satisfaction of one who looked forward to a good dinner and a very enjoyable evening.

"I am happy to have secured you," said L., with a little laugh to himself at the epigram of his phrase. "Do you like caviar?"

"Delight in it!"

"I have just got some fresh from St. Petersburg, and our cook here is rather successful in his caviar soup. We have a red trout from the *Tegen See*, a saddle of Tyrol mutton, and a pheasant—*voilà votre diner!* but I

can promise you a more liberal *carte* in drinkables ; just say what you like in the way of wine ! ”

F.'s face beamed over with ecstasy. It was one of the grand moments of his life ; and if he could, hungry as he was, he would have prolonged it ! To be there the guest of her Majesty's mission ; to know, to feel, that the arms of England were over the door ! that he was to be waited on by flunkies in the livery of the Legation, fed by the cook who had ministered to official palates, his glass filled with wine from the cellar of him who represented royalty ! These were very glorious imaginings ; and little wonder that F., whose whole life was a Poem in its way, should feel that they almost overcame him. In fact, like the woman in the nursery song, he was ready to exclaim, “ This is none of me ! ” but still there were abundant evidences around him that all was actual, positive, and real.

“ By the way,” said L., in a light, careless way, “ did you ever in your wanderings chance upon a namesake of yours, only that he interpolates another Christian name, and calls himself R. Napoleon F. ? ”

The stranger started : the fresh, ruddy glow of his cheek gave way to a sickly yellow, and, rising from his chair, he said, “ Do you mean to ‘ split ’ on me, sir ? ”

“ I'm afraid, F.,” said the other, jauntily, “ the thing looks ugly. You are R. N. F. ! ”

“ And are you, sir, such a scoundrel — such an assassin — as to ask a man to your table in order to betray him ? ”

“ These are strong epithets, F. ; and I'll not discuss them ; but if you ask, Are you going to dine here to-day ? I'd say, No. And if you should ask, Where are

you likely to pass the evening? I'd hint, In the city jail."

At this F. lost all command over himself, and broke out into a torrent of the wildest abuse. He was strong of epithets, and did not spare them. He stormed, he swore, he threatened, he vociferated; but L., imperturbable throughout all, only interposed with an occasional mild remonstrance—a subdued hint—that his language was less than polite or parliamentary. At length the door opened, two gendarmes appeared, and N. F. was consigned to their hands and removed.

The accusations against him were manifold; from before and since the day of the governesses, he had been living a life of dishonesty and fraud. German law proceedings are not characterized by any rash impetuosity; the initial steps in F.'s case took about eighteen months, during which he remained a prisoner. At the end of this time the judges discovered some informality in his committal; and as L. was absent from Munich, and no one at the Legation much interested in the case, the man was liberated on signing a declaration—to which Bavarian authorities, it would seem, attach value—that he was "a rogue and a vagabond;" confessions which the Captain possibly deemed as absurd an act of "surplusage" as though he were to give a written declaration that he was a vertebrated animal and a biped.

He went forth once more, and, difficult as it appears to the intelligence of honest and commonplace folk, he went forth to prosper and live luxuriously—so gullible is the world, so ready and eager to be cheated and deceived. Sir Edward Lytton has somewhere declared that a single number of the *Times* newspaper, taken at

random, would be the very best and most complete picture of our daily life—the fullest exponent of our notions, wants, wishes, and aspirations. Not a hope, nor fear, nor prejudice—not a particle of our blind trustfulness, or of our as blind unbelief, that would not find its reflex in the broadsheet. R. N. F. had arrived at the same conclusion, only in a more limited sense. The advertisement columns were all to him. What cared he for foreign wars, or the state of the Funds? as little did he find interest in railway intelligence, or “our own correspondent.” What he wanted was, the people who inquired after a missing relative—a long-lost son or brother, who was supposed to have died in the Mauritius or Mexico: an affectionate mother who desired tidings as to the burial-place of a certain James or John, who had been travelling in a particular year in the south of Spain: an inquirer for the will of Paul somebody: or any one who could supply evidence as to the marriage of Sarah Meekins *alias* Crowther, supposed to have been celebrated before her Majesty’s Vice-Consul at Koorobakaboo—these were the paragraphs that touched him.

Never was there such a union of intelligence and sympathy as in him! He knew everybody, and seemed not alone to have been known to, but actually beloved by every one. It was in *his* arms poor Joe died at Aden. *He* gave away Maria at Tunis. He followed Tom to his grave at Corfu; and he was the mysterious stranger who, on board the P. and O. boat offered his purse to Edward, and was almost offended at being denied. The way in which this man tracked the stories of families through the few lines of a newspaper advertisement was positively marvellous. Whatever was

wanting in the way of evidence of this, or clue to that, came at once into his attributions.

A couple of years ago, an English lady, the wife of a clergyman, passed a winter at Rome with her daughter, and in the mixed society of that capital made acquaintance with a Polish Count of most charming manners and fascinating address. The acquaintance ripened into intimacy, and ended in an attachment which led to the marriage of the young lady with the distinguished exile.

On arriving in England, however, it was discovered that the distinguished Count was a common soldier, and a deserter from the Prussian army; and means were accordingly had recourse to in order to obtain a divorce, and the breach of a marriage accomplished under a fraudulent representation. While the proceedings were but in the initiative, there came a letter from Oneglia, near Nice, to the afflicted mother of the young lady, recalling to her mind the elderly gentleman with the blue spectacles who usually sat next her at the English Church at Rome. He was the writer of the present letter, who, in turning over the columns of the *Times*, read the melancholy story of her daughter's betrayal and misery. By one of those fortunate accidents more frequent in novels than in life, he had the means of befriending her, and very probably of rescuing her from her present calamity. He, the writer, had actually been present at the wedding, and as a witness had signed the marriage certificate of that same *soi-disant* Count Stanislaus Sobciski Something-or-other, at Lemberg, in the year '49, and knew that the unhappy but deserted wife was yet living. A certain momentary pressure of money prevented his at once



coming to England to testify to this fact ; but if a small sum, sufficient to pay a little balance he owed his inn-keeper, and wherewithal to make his journey to England, were forwarded to the address of Frederick Brooks, Esq., or lodged to his account at the Bank of Ffrench & Co., Florence, he would at once hasten to London and depose formally to every fact he had stated. By the merest accident, I myself saw this letter, which the lady had, for more accurate information about the writer, sent to the banker at Florence, and in an instant I detected the fine Roman hand of R. N. F. It is needless to say that this shot went wide of the mark.

But that this fellow has lived for upwards of twenty years, travelling the Continent in every direction, eating and drinking at the best hotels, frequenting theatres, cafés, and public gardens, denying himself nothing, is surely a shame and a disgrace to the police of Europe, which has been usually satisfied to pass him over a frontier, and suffer him to continue his depredations on the citizens of another state. Of the obloquy he has brought upon his own country I do not speak. We must, I take it, have our scoundrels, like other people ; the only great grievance here is, that the fellow's ubiquity is such that it is hard to believe that the swindler who walked off with the five watches from Hamburg is the same who, in less than eight days afterwards, borrowed fifty ducats from a waiter at Naples, and "bolted."

Of late I have observed he has dropped his second *prénom* of Napoleon, and does not call himself by it. There is perhaps in this omission a delicate forbearance, a sense of refined deference to the other bearer of that name, whom he recognizes as his master.

In the ingenuity of his manifold devices even religion has not escaped him, and it would be impossible to count how often he has left the "Establishment" for Rome, been converted, reconverted, reconciled, and brought home again—always, be it noted, at the special charge of so much money from the Church Fund, or a subscription from the faithful, ever zealous and eager to assist a really devout and truly sincere convert!

That this man is an aspiring and ambitious vagabond may be seen in the occasional raids he makes into the very best society, without having, at least to ordinary eyes, anything to obtain in these ventures, beyond the triumph of seeing himself where exposure and detection would be certain to be followed by the most condign punishment. At Rome, for instance—how, I cannot say—he obtained admission to the Duc de Grammont's receptions; and at Florence, under the pretext of being a proprietor, and "a most influential" one, of the *Times*, he breakfasted, by special invitation, with Baron Ricasoli, and had a long and most interesting conversation with him as to the conditions—of course political—on which he would consent to support Italian unity. These must have been done in pure levity; they were imaginative excursions, thrown off in the spirit of those fanciful variations great violinists will now and then indulge in, as though to say, "Is there a path too intricate for me to thread, is there a pinnacle too fine for me to balance on?"

A good deal of this fellow's long impunity results from the shame men feel in confessing to have been "done" by him. Nobody likes the avowal, acknowledging, as it does, a certain defect in discrimination, and a natural reluctance to own to having been the

dupe of one of the most barefaced and vulgar rogues in Europe.

There is one circumstance in this case which might open a very curious psychological question ; it is this : F.'s victims have not in general been the frank, open, free-giving, or trustful class of men ; on the contrary, they have usually been close-fisted, cold cautious people, who weigh carefully what they do, and are rarely the dupes of their own impulsiveness. F. is an Irishman, and yet his successes have been far more with English—ay, even with Scotchmen—than with his own countrymen.

In part this may be accounted for by the fact that F. did not usually present himself as one in utter want and completely destitute ; his appeal for money was generally made on the ground of some speculation that was to repay the lender ; it was because he knew “something to your advantage” that he asked for that £10. He addressed himself, in consequence, to the more mercantile spirit of a richer community—to those, in fact, who, more conversant with trade, better understood the meaning of an investment.

But there was another, and, as I take it, a stronger and less fallible ground for success. This fellow has, what all Irishmen are more or less gifted with, an immense amount of vitality, a quality which undeniably makes a man companionable, however little there may be to our taste in his manner, his education, or his bearing. This same vitality imparts itself marvellously to the colder temperaments of others, and gives out its own warmth to natures that never of themselves felt the glow of an impulse, or the glorious furnace-heat of a rash action.

This was the magnetism he worked with. "Canny" Scotchmen and shrewd Yankees—ay, even Swiss innkeepers—felt the touch of his quality. There was, or there seemed to be, a geniality in the fellow that, in its apparent contempt for all worldliness, threw men off their guard, and it would have smacked of meanness to distrust a fellow so open and unguarded.

Now, Paddy had seen a good deal of this at home, and could no more be humbugged by it than he could believe a potato to be a truffle.

F. was too perfect an artist ever to perform in an Irish part to an Irish audience, and so he owes little or nothing to the land of his birth.

Apart from his unquestionable success, which of course settles the question, I would not have called him a great performer—indeed, my astonishment has always been how he succeeded, or with whom.

"Don't tell me of Beresford's blunders," said the Great Duke, after Albuera. "Did he beat Soult? if so, he was a good officer."

This man's triumphs are some twenty odd years of expensive living, with occasional excursions into good society. He wears broadcloth, and dines on venison, when his legitimate costume had been the striped uniform of the galleys, and his diet the black bread of a convict.

The injury these men do in life is not confined to the misery their heartless frauds inflict, for the very humblest and poorest are often their victims: they do worse, in the way they sow distrust and suspicion of really deserving objects, in the pretext they afford the miserly man to draw closer his purse-strings, and

"not be imposed on ;" and, worst of all, in the ill repute they spread of a nation which, not attractive by the graces of manner or the charms of a winning address, yet cherished the thought that in truthfulness and fair dealing there was not one could gainsay it.

As I write, I have just heard tidings of R. N. F. One of our most distinguished travellers and discoverers, lately returning from Venice to the South, passed the night at Padua, and met there what he described as an Indian officer—Major Newton—who was travelling, he said, with a nephew of Lord Palmerston's.

The Major was a man full of anecdote, and abounded in knowledge of people and places ; he had apparently been everywhere with everybody, and, with a communicativeness not always met with in old soldiers, gave to the stranger a rapid sketch of his own most adventurous life. As the evening wore on, he told, too, how he was waiting there for a friend, a certain N. F., who was no other than himself, the nephew of Lord Palmerston being represented by his son, an apt youth, who has already given bright promise of what his later years may develop.

N. F. retired to bed at last, so much overcome by brandy-and-water that my informant escaped being asked for a loan, which I plainly see he would not have had the fortitude to have refused ; and the following morning he started so early that N. F., wide awake as he usually is, was not vigilant enough to have anticipated.

I hope these brief details, *pour servir à l'histoire de Monsieur R. N. F.*, may save some kind-hearted traveller

from the designs of a thorough blackguard, and render his future machinations through the press more difficult to effect and more certain of exposure.

I had scarcely finished this brief, imperfect sketch, when I read in *Galignani* the following :—

“SWINDLING ON THE CONTINENT.—A letter from Venice of March 29th gives us the following piece of information, which may still be of service to some of our readers, though, from the fact with which it concludes, it would seem that the proceedings of the party have been brought to a standstill, at least for some time. This is not, however, it may be recollected, the first occasion we have had to bring the conduct of the individual referred to under the notice of our readers for similar practices:—

“‘I am informed that one Mr. Newton, *alias* Neville, *alias* Fane, and with a dozen other *aliases*, has been arrested at Padua for swindling. This ubiquitous gentleman has been travelling for some years at the expense of hotel-keepers, and other geese easily fleeced, on the Continent. In the year 1862, Mr. Neville and his two sons made their suspicious appearance at Venice, and they now, minus the younger son, have visited Padua as Mr. Robert N. Newton and son, taking up their residence at the Stella d’Oro. They arrived without luggage and without money, both of which had been lost in the Danube; but they expected remittances from India! The obliging landlord lent money, purchased clothes, fed them gloriously, and contrived, between the 8th Feb. and 25th of March, to become the creditor of Newton and son for 1000 swanzig. The expenses continued, but the remittances

never came. The patient landlord began to lose that virtue, and denounced these *aliases* as swindlers. The police of Vienna, hearing of the event, sent information that these two accommodating gentlemen had practised the victimising art for two months in December last at the Hotel Regina d'Inghilterra, at Pesth, run up a current account of 700 florins, and decamped; and a hotel-keeper recognized the scamps as having resided at the Luna, in Venice, in 1862, and "plucked some profit from that pale-faced moon." Mr. Newton's handwriting proved him to be in 1863 one Major Fane, who had generously proposed to bring all his family, consisting of ten persons, to pass the winter at the Barbcsi Hotel at Venice, if the proprietor would forward him 700 fr., as, owing to his wife's prolonged residence at Rome and Naples, he was short of money, which, however, he expected would cease on the arrival of supplies from Calcutta. These gentlemen are now in durance vile, and there is no doubt but that this letter will lead to their recognition by many other victims.' "

Let no sanguine enthusiast for the laws of property imagine, however, that this great man's career is now ended, and that R. N. F. will no more go forth as of old to plunder and to rob. Imprisonment for debt is a grievous violation of personal liberty certainly, but it is finite; and some fine morning, when the lark is carolling high in heaven, and the bright rivulets are laughing in the gay sunlight, R. N. F. will issue from his dungeon to taste again the sweets of liberty, and to partake once more of the flesh-pots of some confiding landlord. F. is a man of great resources, doubtless.

When he repeats a part, he feels the same sort of repugnance that Fechter would to giving a fiftieth representation of Hamlet, but he would bow to the necessity which a clamorous public imposes, however his own taste might rebel against the dreariness of the task. Still, I feel assured that he will next appear in a new part. We shall hear of him—that is certain. He will be in search of a lost will, by which he would inherit millions, or a Salvator Rosa that he has been engaged to buy for the Queen, or perhaps he will be a missionary to assist in that religious movement now observable in Italy. How dare I presume, in my narrow inventiveness, to suggest to such a master of the art as he is? I only know that, whether he comes before the world as the friend of Sir Hugh Rose, a proprietor of the *Times*, the agent of Lord Palmerston, or a recent convert from Popery, he will sustain his part admirably; and that same world that he has duped, robbed, and swindled for more than a quarter of a century will still feed and clothe him—still believe in the luggage that never comes, and the remittance that will never turn up.

After all, the man must be a greater artist than I was willing to believe him to be. He must be a deep student of the human heart—not, perhaps, in its highest moods; and he must well understand how to touch certain chords which give their response in unlimited confidence and long credit.

No doubt there must be some wondrous fascination in these changeful fortunes—these ups and downs of life—otherwise no man could have gone, as he has, for nigh thirty years, hunted, badgered, insulted, and imprisoned in almost every capital of Europe, and yet no



sooner liberated than, like a giant refreshed, he again returns to his old toil, never weary wherever the bread of idleness can be eaten, and where a lie will pay for his liquor.

Talk of novel-writers—this is the great master of fiction—the man who brings the product of imagination to the real test of credibility—the actual interest of his public. Let him fail in his description, his narrative, the progress of his events, or their probability, and he is ruined at once. He must not alone arrange the circumstances of his story, but he must perform the hero, and that, too, as we saw lately at Padua, without any adventitious aid of dress or costume. I can fancy what a sorry figure some of our popular tale-writers would present if they had to appeal to an innkeeper with this poor story of their luggage lost in the Danube. What a contempt the rascal must have had for Italian notions of geography, too, when he adopted a river so remote from where he stood! And yet I'd swear he was as cool, as collected, and as self-sustained at that moment, as ever was Mr. Gladstone in the House as he rose to move a motion of supply.

Well, he is in Padua now, doubtless dreaming of fresh conquests, and not impossibly speculating on a world whose gullibility is indeed infinite, and which actually seems to take the same pleasure in being cheated in Fact as it does in being deceived in Fiction. Who knows if the time is not coming when, instead of sending a box of new novels to the country, some Mr. Mudie will despatch one of these R. N. F. folk by a fast train, with a line to say, "A great success: his Belgian rogueries most amusing; the exploit at Madrid equal to anything in 'Gil Blas'!"?

## GARIBALDI.

WE had a very witty Judge in Ireland, who was not very scrupulous about giving hard knocks to his brothers on the bench, and who, in delivering a judgment in a cause, found that he was to give the casting-vote between his two colleagues, who were diametrically opposed to each other, and who had taken great pains to lay down their reasons for their several opinions at considerable length. "It now comes to my turn," said he, "to declare my view of this case, and fortunately I can afford to be brief. I agree with my brother B. from the irresistible force of the admirable argument of my brother M."

The story occurred to me as I thought over Garibaldi and the enthusiastic reception you gave him in England ; for I really felt, if it had not been for Carlyle, I might have been a bit of a hero-worshipper myself. The grand frescoes in caricature of the popular historian have, however, given me a hearty and wholesome disgust to the whole thing ; not to say that, however enthusiastic a man may feel about his idol, he must be sorely ashamed of his fellow-worshippers. "Lie down with dogs, and you'll get up with fleas," says an old Irish adage ; but what, in the name of all entomology, is a

man to get up with who lies down with these votaries of Garibaldi? So fine a fellow, and so mangy a following, it would be hard to find. The opportunity for all the blatant balderdash of shopkeeping eloquence, of that high "Falootin" style so popular over the Atlantic, of those grand-sounding periods about freedom and love of country, was not to be lost by a set of people who, in all their enthusiasm for Garibaldi, are intently bent on making themselves foreground figures in the tableau that should have been filled by himself alone.

"Sir Francis Burdett call *you* his friend!—as well call a Bug his bedfellow!" said the sturdy old yeoman, whose racy English I should like to borrow, to characterize the stupid incongruity between Garibaldi and his worshippers. It is not easy to conceive anything finer, simpler, more thoroughly unaffected, or more truly dignified, than the man himself. His noble head; his clear, honest, brown eye; his finely-traced mouth, beautiful as a woman's, and only strung up to sternness when anything ignoble or mean had outraged him; and, last of all, his voice contains a fascination perfectly irresistible, allied, as you knew and felt these graces were, with a thoroughly pure, untarnished nature. The true measure of the man lies in the fact that, though his life has been a series of the boldest and most daring achievements, his courage is about the very last quality uppermost in your mind when you meet him. It is of the winning softness of his look and manner, his kind thoughtfulness for others, his sincere pity for all suffering, his gentleness, his modesty, his manly sense of brotherhood with the very humblest of the men who have loved him, that you think: these are the traits that throw all his heroism into shadow; and all the glory

of the conqueror pales before the simple virtues of the man.

He never looked to more advantage than in that humble life of Caprera, where people came and went—some, old and valued friends, whose presence warmed up their host's heart; others, mere passing acquaintances, or, as it might be, not even that; worshippers or curiosity-seekers—living where and how they could in that many-roomed small house; diving into the kitchen to boil their coffee; sallying out to the garden to pluck their radishes; down to the brook for a cress, or to the seaside to catch a fish,—all more or less busy in the midst of a strange idleness; for there was not—beyond providing for the mere wants of the day—anything to be done. The soil would not yield anything. There was no cultivation outside that little garden, where the grand old soldier delved, or rested on his spade-handle as he turned his gaze over the sea, doubtless thinking of the dear land beyond it.

At dinner—and what a strange meal it was—all met, full of the little incidents of an uneventful day. The veriest trifles they were, but of interest to those who listened, and to none more than to Garibaldi himself, who liked to hear who had been over to Maddalena, and what sport they had; or whether Albanesi had taken any mullet, and who it was said he could mend the boat? and who was to paint her? Not a word was spoken of the political events of the world, and every mention of them was as rigidly excluded as though a government spy had been seated at the table.

He rarely spoke himself, but was a good listener—not merely hearing with attention, but showing, by an

occasional suggestion or a hint, how his mind speculated on the subject before him. If, however, led to speak of himself or his exploits, the unaffected ease and simplicity of the man became at once evident. Never, by any chance, would an expression escape him that redounded to his own share in any achievement; without any studied avoidance the matter would somehow escape, or, if accidentally touched on, be done so very lightly as to make it appear of no moment whatever.

To have done one-tenth of what Garibaldi has done, a man must necessarily have thrown aside scruples which he would never have probably transgressed in his ordinary life. He must have been often arbitrary, and sometimes almost cruel; and yet, ask his followers, and they will tell you that punishment scarcely existed in the force under his immediate command—that the most hardened offender would have quailed more under a few stern words of reproof from “the General” than from a sentence that sent him to a prison.

That, to effect his purpose, he would lay hands on what he needed, not recklessly or indifferently, but thoughtfully and doubtless regretfully, we all know. I can remember an instance of this kind, related to me by a British naval officer, who himself was an actor in the scene. “It was off La Plata,” said my informant, “when Garibaldi was at war with Rosas, that the frigate I commanded was on that station, as well as a small gun-brig of the Sardinian navy, whose captain never harassed his men by exercises of gunnery, and, indeed, whose ship was as free from any ‘beat to quarters,’ or any sudden summons to prepare for boarders, as though she had been a floating chapel.

"Garibaldi came alongside me one day to say that he had learned the Sardinian had several tons of powder on board, with an ample supply of grape, shell, and canister, not to speak of twelve hundred stand of admirable arms. 'I want them all,' said he; 'my people are fighting with staves and knives, and we are totally out of ammunition. I want them, and he won't let me have them.'

"'He could scarcely do so,' said I, 'seeing that they belong to his Government, and are not in *his* hands to bestow.'

"'For that reason I must go and take them,' said Garibaldi. 'I mean to board him this very night, and you'll see if we do not replenish our powder-flasks.'

"'In that case,' said I, 'I shall have to fire on you. It will be Piracy; nothing else.'

"'You'll not do so,' said he, smiling.

"'Yes, I promise you that I will. We are at peace and on good terms with Sardinia, and I cannot behave other than as a friend to her ships of war.'

"'There's no help for it, then,' said Garibaldi, 'if you see the thing in that light:' and good-humouredly quitted the subject, and soon after took his leave."

"And were you," asked I of my informant, Captain S.—"were you perfectly easy after that conversation? I mean, were you fully satisfied that he would not attempt the matter in some other way?"

"Never more at ease in my life. I knew my man; and that, having left me under the conviction he had abandoned the exploit, nothing on earth would have tempted him to renew it in any shape."

It might be a matter of great doubt whether any greater intellectual ability would not have rather detracted from than increased Garibaldi's power as a popular leader. I myself feel assured that the simplicity, the trustfulness, the implicit reliance on the goodness of a cause as a reason for a success, are qualities which no mere mental superiority could replace in popular estimation. It is actually Love that is the sentiment the Italians have for him ; and I have seen them, hard-featured, ay, and hard-natured men, moved to tears as the litter on which Garibaldi lay wounded was carried down to the place of embarkation.

“Garibaldi has always been a thoughtful, silent reflective man, not communicative to others, or in any way expansive ; and from these qualities have come alike his successes and his failures. Of the conversations reported of him by writers I do not believe a syllable. He speaks very little ; and, luckily for him, that little only with those on whose integrity he can rely not to repeat him.

Cavour, who knew men thoroughly, and studied them just as closely as he studied events, understood at once that Garibaldi was the man he wanted. He needed one who should move the national heart—who, sprung from the people himself, and imbued with all the instincts of his class, should yet not dis sever the cause of liberty from the cause of monarchy. To attach Garibaldi to the throne was no hard task. The King, who led the van of his army, was an idol made for such worship as Garibaldi's. The monarch who could carry a knapsack and a heavy rifle over the cliffs of Monte Rosa from sunrise to sunset, and take his meal of hard bread before he “turned in” at night

in a shepherd's shieling, was a King after the bold buccaneer's own heart.

To what end inveigh against the luxuries of a court, its wasteful splendours, or its costly extravagance, with such an example? This strong-sinewed, big-boned, unpoetical King has been the hardest nut ever republicanism had to crack!

It might be possible to overrate the services Garibaldi has rendered to Italy—it would be totally impossible to exaggerate those he has rendered the Monarchy; and out of Garibaldi's devotion to Victor Emmanuel has sprung that hearty, honest, manly appreciation of the King which the Italians unquestionably display. A merely political head of the State, though he were gifted with the highest order of capacity, would have disappeared altogether from view in the sun-splendour of Garibaldi's exploits; not so the King Victor Emmanuel, who only shone the brighter in the reflected blaze of the hero who was so proud to serve him.

Yet for all that friendship, and all the acts that grew out of it, natural and spontaneous as they are, one great mind was needed to guide, direct, encourage, or restrain. It was Cavour who, behind the scenes, pulled all the wires; and these heroes—heroes they were too—were but his puppets.

Cavour died, and then came Aspromonte.

If any other man than Garibaldi had taken the present moment to make a visit—an almost ostentatious visit—to Mazzini, it might be a grave question how far all the warm enthusiasm of this popular reception could be justified. Garibaldi is, however, the one man in Europe from whom no one expects anything but impulsive action. It is in the very unreflectiveness



of his generosity that he is great. There has not been, I am assured, for many years back, any close or intimate friendship between these two men; but it was quite enough that Mazzini was in trouble and difficulty, to rally to his side that brave-hearted comrade who never deserted his wounded. Nor is there in all Garibaldi's character anything finer or more exalted than the steadfast adherence he has ever shown to his early friendships. No flatteries of the great—no blandishments of courts and courtiers—none of those seductive influences which are so apt to weave themselves into a man's nature when surrounded by continual homage and admiration—not any of these have corrupted that pure and simple heart; and there is not a presence so exalted, nor a scene of splendour so imposing, as could prevent Garibaldi from recognizing with eager delight any the very humblest companion that ever shared hardship and danger beside him.

To have achieved his successes, a man must of necessity have rallied around him many besides enthusiasts of the cause; he must have recruited amongst men of broken fortunes—reckless, lawless fellows, who accepted the buccaneer's life as a means of wiping off old scores with that old world “that would have none of them.” It was not amidst the orderly, the soberly-trained, and well-to-do that he could seek for followers. And what praise is too great for him who could so inspire this mass, heaving with passion as it was, with his own noble sentiments, and make them feel that the work before them—a nation's regeneration—was a task too high and too holy to be accomplished by unclean hands? Can any eulogy exaggerate the services of a man who could so magnetize his fellow-men as to

associate them at once with his nobility of soul, and elevate them to a standard little short of his own? That he *did* do this we have the proof. Pillage was almost unknown amongst the Garibaldians; and these famished, ill-clad, shoeless men marched on from battle to battle with scarcely an instance of crime that called for the interference of military law.

Where is the General who could boast of doing as much? Where is the leader who could be bold enough to give such a pledge for his followers? Is there an army in Europe—in the world—for whom as much could be said?

All honour, therefore, to the man—not whose example only, but whose very contact suggests high intent and noble action. All honour to him who brings to a great cause, not alone the dazzling splendour of heroism, but the more enduring brightness of a pure and unsullied integrity!

Such a man may be misled; he can never be corrupted.

## THE DECLINE OF WHIST.

WHAT is the reason of the decline of Whist? Why is it that every year we find fewer players, and less proficiency in those who play? It is a far graver question than it may seem at first blush, and demands an amount of investigation much deeper than I am able to give it here.

Of course I am prepared to hear that people now-a-days are too accomplished and too intellectual to be obliged to descend for their pastime to a mere game at cards; that higher topics engage and higher interests occupy them; that they read and reflect more than their fathers and grandfathers did; and that they would look down with disdain upon an intellectual combat where the gladiators might be the last surviving veterans of a bygone century.

Now, if the conversational tone of our time were pre-eminently brilliant—if people were wiser, wittier, more amusing, and more instructive than formerly—if we lived in an age of really good talkers,—I might assent to the force of this explanation; but what is the truth? Ours is, of all the times recorded by history, the dullest and dreariest; rare as whist-players are, pleasant people are still rarer. It is not merely that the

power of entertaining is gone, but so has the ambition. Nobody tries to please, and the success is admirable! It is fashionable to be stupid, and we are the most modish people in the universe. It is absurd, then, in a society whose interchange of thought is expressed in monosyllables, and a certain haw-haw dreariness pervades all intercourse, to say that people are above Whist. Why, they are below Push-pin!

It would be sufficient to point to the age when Whist was most in vogue, to show that it flavoured a society second to none in agreeability; and who were the players? The most eminent divines, the greatest ministers, the most profound jurists, the most subtle diplomatists. What an influence a game so abounding in intellectual teaching must have exercised on the society where it prevailed can scarcely be computed. Blackstone has a very remarkable passage on the great social effect produced upon the Romans by their popular games; and he goes so far as to say that society imbibes a vast amount of those conventionalities which form its laws, from an unconscious imitation of the rules which govern its pastimes. Take our own time, and I ask with confidence, should we find such want of purpose as our public men exhibit, such uncertainty, such feebleness, and such defective allegiance to party, in a whist-playing age? Would men be so ready as we see them to renounce their principles, if they bore fresh in their mind all the obloquy that follows "a revoke?" Would they misquote their statistics in face of the shame that attends on "a false score?" Would they be so ready to assert what they know they must retract, if they had a recent recollection of being called on to "take down the honours?"

Think, then, of the varied lessons—moral as well as mental—that the game instils; the caution, the reserve, the patient attention, the memory, the deep calculation of probabilities, embracing all the rules of evidence, the calm self-reliance, and the vigorous daring that shows when what seems even rashness may be the safest of all expedients. Imagine the daily practice of these gifts and faculties, and tell me, if you can, that he who exercises them can cease to employ them in his everyday life. You might as well assert that the practice of gymnastics neither develops the muscle nor increases strength.

I cannot believe a great public man to have attained a full development of his power if he has not been a whist-player; and for a leader of the House it is an absolute necessity. Take a glance for a moment at what goes on in Parliament in this non-whist age, and mark the consequences. Look in at an ordinary sitting of the House, and see how damaging to his party that unhappy man is, who *will* ask a question to-day which this day week would be unanswerable. What is that but “playing his card out of time?” See that other who rises to know if something be true; the unlucky “something” being the key-note to his party’s politics which he has thus disclosed. What is this but “showing his hand?” Hear that dreary blunderer, who has unwittingly contradicted what his chief has just asserted—“trumping,” as it were, “his partner’s trick.” Or that still more fatal wretch who, rising at a wrong moment, has taken “the lead out of the hand” that could have won the game. I boldly ask, would there be one—even one—of these solecisms committed in an age when Whist was cultivated, and men were

brought up in the knowledge and practice of the odd trick ?

Look at the cleverness with which Lord Palmerston "forces the hand" of the Opposition. Watch the rapidity with which Lord Derby pounces upon the card Lord Russell has let drop, and "calls on him to play it." And in the face of all this you will see scores of these bland whiskered creatures Leech gives us in *Punch*, who, if asked, "Can they play?" answer with a contemptuous ha-ha laugh, "I rather think not."

To the real player, besides, Whist was never so engrossing as to exclude occasional remark ; and some of the smartest and wittiest of Talleyrand's sayings were uttered at the card-table. Imagine, then, the inestimable advantage to the young man entering life, to be privileged to sit down in that little chosen coterie, where sages dropped words of wisdom, and brilliant men let fall those gems of wit that actually light up an era. By what other agency—through what fortuitous combination of events other than the game—could he hope to enjoy such companionship? How could he be thrown not merely into their society, but their actual intimacy?

It would be easy for me to illustrate the inestimable benefits of this situation, if we possessed what, to the scandal of our age, we do not possess—any statistics of Whist. Newspapers record the oldest inhabitant or the biggest gooseberry, but tell us nothing biographical of those who have illustrated the resources and extended the boundaries of this glorious game. We even look in vain for any mention of Whist in the lives of some of its first proficientes. Take Cavour, for instance. Not one of his biographers has recorded his passion for

Whist, and yet he was a good player : too venturous, perhaps—too dashing—but splendid with “a strong hand !” During all the sittings of the Paris Congress he played every night at the Jockey Club, and won very largely—some say above twenty thousand pounds.

The late Prince Metternich played well, but not brilliantly. It was a patient, cautious back-game, and never fully developed till the last card was played. He grew easily tired, too, and very seldom could sit out more than twelve or fourteen rubbers, unlike Talleyrand, who always rose from table, after perhaps twelve hours' play, fresher and brighter than when he began. Lord Melbourne played well, but had moments of distraction, when he suffered the smaller interests of politics to interfere with his combinations. I single him out, however, as a graceful compliment to a party who have numbered few good players in their ranks ; for certainly the Tories could quote fully ten to one whisters against the Whigs. The Whigs are too superficial, too crotchety, and too self-opinionated to be whist-players ; and, worse than all, too distrustful. A Whig could never trust his partner—he could not for a moment disabuse himself of the notion that his colleague meant to outwit him. A Whig, too, would invariably try to win by something not perfectly legitimate ; and, last of all, he would be incessantly appealing to the bystanders, and asking if he had not, even if egregiously beaten, played better than his opponents.

The late Cabinet of Lord Derby contained some good players. Two of the Secretaries of State were actually fine players, and one of them adds Whist to accomplishments which would have made their possessor an Admirable Crichton, if genius had not ele-

vated him into a far loftier category than Crichton's belong to. Rechberg plays well, and likes his game; but he is in Whist, as are all Germans, a thorough pedant. I remember an incident of his whist-life sufficiently amusing in its way, though, in relation, the reader loses what to myself is certainly the whole pungency of the story: I mean the character and nature of the person who imparted the anecdote to me, and who is about the most perfect specimen of that self-possession, which we call coolness, the age we live in can boast of.

I own that in a very varied and somewhat extensive experience of men in many countries, I never met with one who so completely fulfilled all the requisites of temper, manner, face, courage, and self-reliance, which make of a human being the most unabashable and unemotional creature that walks the earth.

I tell the story as nearly as I can as he related it to me. "I used to play a good deal with Rechberg," said he, "and took pleasure in worrying him, for he was a great purist in his play, and was outraged with anything that could not be sustained by an authority. In fact, each game was followed by a discussion of full half-an-hour, to the intense mortification of the other players, though very amusing to me, and offering me large opportunity to irritate and plague the Austrian.

"One evening, after a number of these discussions, in which Rechberg had displayed an even unusual warmth and irritability, I found myself opposed to him in a game, the interest of which had drawn around us a large assembly of spectators—what the French designate as *la galérie*. Towards the conclusion of the game it was my turn to lead, and I played a card which so



astounded the Austrian Minister, that he laid down his cards upon the table and stared fixedly at me.

“‘In all my experience of Whist,’ said he, deliberately, ‘I never saw the equal of that.’

“‘Of what?’ asked I.

“‘Of the card you have just played,’ rejoined he. ‘It is not merely that such play violates every principle of the game, but it actually stultifies all your own combinations.’

“‘I think differently, Count,’ said I. ‘I maintain that it is good play, and I abide by it.’

“‘Let us decide it by a wager,’ said he.

“‘In what way?’

“‘Thus: We shall leave the question to the *galérie*. You shall allege what you deem to be the reasons for your play, and they shall decide if they accept them as valid.’

“‘I agree. What will you bet?’

“‘Ten napoleons—twenty, fifty, five hundred, if you like!’ cried he, warmly.

“‘I shall say ten. You don’t like losing, and I don’t want to punish you too heavily.’

“‘There is the jury, sir,’ said he, haughtily; ‘make your case.’

“‘The wager is this,’ said I, ‘that, to win, I shall satisfy these gentlemen that for the card I played I had a sufficient and good reason.’

“‘Yes.’

“‘My reason was this, then—I looked into your hand!’

“I pocketed his ten napoleons, but they were the last I won of him. Indeed, it took a month before he got over the shock.”

It would be interesting if we had, which unhappily we have not, any statistical returns to show what classes and professions have produced the best whist-players. In my own experience I have found civilians the superiors of the military.

Diplomatists I should rank first; their game was not alone finer and more subtle, but they showed a recuperative power in their play which others rarely possessed: they extricated themselves well out of difficulties, and always made their losses as small as possible. Where they broke down was when they were linked with a bad partner: they invariably played on a level which he could never attain to, and in this way cross purposes and misunderstandings were certain to ensue.

Lawyers, as a class, play well; but their great fault is, they play too much for the *galérie*. The habit of appealing to the jury jags and blurs the finer edge of their faculties, and they are more prone to canvass the suffrages of the surrounderers than to address themselves to the actual issue. For this reason, Equity practitioners are superior to the men in the Courts below.

Physicians are seldom first-rate players—they are always behind their age in Whist, and rarely, if ever, know any of the fine points which Frenchmen have introduced into the game. Their play, too, is timid—they regard trumps as powerful stimulants, and only administer them as drop-doses. They seldom look at the game as a great whole, but play on, card after card, deeming each trick they turn as a patient disposed of, and not in any way connected with what has preceded or is to follow it.

Divines are in Whist pretty much where geology

was in the time of the first Georges; still I have met with a bishop and a stray archdeacon or two who could hold their own. I am speaking here of the Establishment, because in Catholic countries the higher clergy are very often good players. Antonelli, for instance, might sit down at the Portland or the Turf; and even my old friend G. P. would find that his Eminence was his match.

Soldiers are sorry performers, for mess-play is invariably bad; but sailors are infinitely worse. They have but one notion, which is to play out all the best cards as fast as they can, and then appeal to their partner to score as many tricks as they have—an inhuman performance, which I have no doubt has cost many apoplexies.

On the whole, Frenchmen are better players than we are. Their game is less easily divined, and all their intimations (*invites*) more subtle and more refined. The Emperor plays well. In England he played a great deal at the late Lord Eglinton's, though he was never the equal of that accomplished Earl, whose mastery of all games, especially those of address, was perfection.

The Irish have a few brilliant players—one of them is on the bench; but the Scotch are the most winning of all British whisters. The Americans are rarely first-rate, but they have a large number of good second-class players. Even with them, however, Whist is on the decline; and Euchre and Poker, and a score more of other similar abominations, have usurped the place of the king of games. What is to be done to arrest the progress of this indifferentism? How are we to awaken men out of the stupor of this apathy? Have they

never heard of the terrible warning of Talleyrand to his friend who could not play, as he said, "Have you reflected on the miserable old age that awaits you?" How much of human nature that would otherwise be unprofitable can be made available by Whist! What scores of tiresome old twaddlers are there who can still serve their country as whisters! what feeble intelligences that can flicker out into a passing brightness at the sight of the "turned trump"!

Think of this, and think what is to become of us when the old, the feeble, the tiresome, and the interminable will all be thrown broadcast over society without an object or an occupation. Imagine what Bores will be let loose upon the world, and fancy how feeble will be all efforts of wit or pleasantry to season a mass of such incapables! Think, I say, think of this. It is a peril that has long been threatening—even from that time when old Lord Hertford, baffled and discouraged by the invariable reply, "I regret, my Lord, that I cannot play Whist," exclaimed, "I really believe that the day is not distant when no gentleman can have a vice that requires more than two people!"

## FOREIGN CLUBS.

How is it, will any one tell me, that all foreign Clubs are so ineffably stupid? I do not suspect that we English are pre-eminent for social gifts; and yet we are the only nation that furnishes clubable men. Frenchmen are wittier, Germans profounder, Russians—externally at least—more courteous and accommodating; and yet their Clubs are mere *tripots*—gambling establishments; and, except play, no other feature of Club-life is to be found in them.

To give a Club its particular “cachet”—its, so to say, trade-mark—you require a class of men who make the Club their home, and whose interest it is that all the internal arrangements should be as perfect, as well ordered, and frictionless as may be. Good furniture, good servants, good lighting, good cookery, well-adjusted temperature, and a well-chosen cellar, are all essentials. In a word, the Club is to be the realization of what we all think so much of—comfort. Now, how very few foreigners either understand or care for this! Every one who has travelled abroad has seen the “Cercle,” or “L’Union,” or whatever its name be, where men of the highest station—ministers, ambassadors, generals, and suchlike—met to smoke and play

whist with a sanded floor, a dirty attendance, and yet no one ever complained. They drank detestable beer, and inhaled a pestilent atmosphere, and sat in draughts, without a thought that there was anything to be remedied, or that human skill could or need contrive anything better for their accommodation.

When these establishments were succeeded by the modern Club, with its carpeted floor, silk hangings, ormolu lamps, and velvet couches, the change was made in a pure spirit of *Anglomanie*; somebody had been over to London, and come back full of the splendours of Pall Mall. The work of imitation, so far as decoration went, was not difficult. Indeed, in some respects in this they even went beyond us, but there ended the success. The Club abroad is a room where men gamble, and talk of gambling, but no more; it is not a Club.

For the working of the Club, as for that of constitutional government, a special class are required. It is the great masses of the middle ranks in England, varied enough in fortune, education, habits, and tastes, but still one in some great condition of a status, that supply the materials for the work of a parliamentary government; and it is through the supply of a large community of similar people, that Clubs are maintained in their excellence with us.

For the success of a Club you need a number of men perfectly incapable of all life save such as a Club supplies; who repair to the Club, not alone to dine and smoke and sup, and read their paper, but to interchange thought in that blended half-confidence that the Club imparts; to hear the gossip of the day told in the spirit of men of their own leanings; to ascertain

what judgments are passed on public events and public characters by the people they like to agree with ;—in fact, to give a sort of familiar domestic tone to intercourse, suggesting the notion that the Club is a species of sanctuary where men can talk at their ease. The men who furnish this category with us are neither young nor old, they are the middle-aged, retaining some of the spring and elasticity of youth, but far more inclining to the solidity of riper years. If they frequent the Opera, it is to a stall, not to the *coulisses*, they go. They are more critical than they used to be about their dinners, and they have a tendency to mix seltzer with their champagne. They have reached that bourne in which egotism has become an institution ; and by the transference of its working to the Club, they accomplish that marvellous creation by which each man sees himself and his ways and his wants and his instincts reflected in a thousand varied shapes.

Now, there are two things no nation of the Continent possesses—Spring, and middle-aged people. You may be young for a good long spell—some have been known, by the judicious appliances of art, to keep on for sixty years or so ; but when you do pass the limit, there is no neutral territory—no *mezzo termine*. Fall out of the Young Guard, and you must serve as a Veteran. The levity and frivolity, the absence of all serious interest in life, which mark the leisure classes abroad, follow men sometimes even to extreme old age. The successive changes of temperament and taste which we mark at home have no correlatives abroad. The foreigner inhabits at sixty the same sort of world he did at six-and-twenty ; he does not dance so much, but he lingers in the ballroom, and he is just as keenly

alive to all the little naughty talk that amused him forty years ago, and fully as much interested to hear that the world is just as false and as wicked as it used to be when he was better able to contribute to its frailty and wickedness.

Not one of these men, with their padded pectorals and dyed whiskers, will admit that they are of an age to require comfort. They are ardent youths all of them, turning night into day as of old, and no more sensible of fatigue from late hours, hot rooms, and dissipation than they were a quarter of a century back.

Can you fancy anything less clubable than a set of men like this? You might as well set before me the stale bon-bons and sugar-plums of a dessert for a dinner, as ask me to take such people for associates and companions. The tone of everlasting trifling disgraces even idleness; and these men contrive in their lives to reverse the laws of physics, since it is by their very levity that they fall.

The humoristic temperament is the soul of Club-life. It is the keen appreciation of others in all their varied moods and shades of feeling that imparts the highest enjoyment to that strange democracy, the Club; and foreigners are immensely deficient in this element. They are infinitely readier, smarter, and wittier than Englishmen. They will hit in an epigram what we would take an hour to embrace in an argument: but for the racy pleasure of seeing how such a man will listen to this, what such another will say to that, how far individuality, in fact, will mould and fashion the news of the day, and assimilate its mental food to its own digestive powers, there is nothing like the Englishman — and especially the Englishman of the Club.



There is nothing like Major Pendennis to be found from Trolhatten to Messina, and yet Pendennis is a class with us; and it is in the nicely-blended selfishness and complaisance, the egotism and obligingness, that we find the purest element of Club-life.

The Parisian are the best—far and away the best—of all foreign Clubs; best in their style of “get-up,” decoration, and arrangement, and best also in tone and social manner. The St. Petersburg Club is the most gorgeous, the habits the most costly, the play the highest. It is not very long since that a young Russian noble lost in one evening a sum equal to a hundred thousand pounds. The Vienna Club is good in its own stiff German way; but, generally speaking, German Clubs are very ill-arranged, dirty, and comfortless. The Italian are better. Turin, Naples, and Florence have reasonably good Clubs. Rome has nothing but the thing called the English Club, a poorly-got-up establishment of small whist-players and low “points.”

It is a very common remark, that costume has a great influence over people's conduct, and that the man in his shooting-jacket will occasionally give way to impulsive outbursts that he had never thought of yielding to in his white-cravat moments. Whether this be strictly true or not, there is little doubt that the style and character of the room a man sits in insensibly affect his manner and his bearing, and that the habits which would not be deemed strange in the low-ceilinged chamber, with the sanded floor and the “mutton lights,” would be totally indecorous in the richly-carpeted room, a blaze of wax-light, and glittering with decoration. Now this alternating between Club and *Café* spoils men utterly. It engenders the worst pos-

sible style—a double manner. The over-stiffness here and the over-ease there are alike faulty.

The great, the fatal defect of all foreign Clubs is, the existence of some one, perhaps two tyrants, who, by loud talk, swagger, an air of presumed superiority and affectation of “knowing the whole thing,” brow-beat and ride rough-shod over all their fellows. It is in the want of that wholesome corrective, public opinion, that this pestilence is possible. Of public opinion the Continent knows next to nothing in any shape; and yet it is by the unwritten judgments of such a tribunal that society is guided in England, and the same law that discourages the bully supports and encourages the timid, without either the one or the other having the slightest power to corrupt the court, or coerce its decrees. Club-life is, in a way, the normal school for parliamentary demeanour; and until foreigners understand the Club, they will never comprehend the etiquette of the “Chamber.”

## DECLINE OF THE DRAMA.

WHAT a number of ingenious reasons have been latterly given for the decline of the Drama, and the decrease of interest now felt for the stage. Some aver that people are nowadays too cultivated, too highly educated, to take pleasure in a play; others opine that the novel has supplanted the drama; others again declare that it is the prevalence of a religious sentiment on the subject that has damaged theatrical representation. For my own part, I take a totally different view of the subject. My notion is this: the world will never pay a high price for an inferior article, if it can obtain a first-rate one for nothing; in other words, people are come to the conclusion that the best actors are not to be found on the boards of the Haymarket or the Adelphi, but in the world at large—at the Exchange, in the parks, on railroads or river-steamers, at the soirées of learned societies, in Parliament, at Civic dinners or Episcopal visitations.

Why has the masquerade ceased to interest and amuse? Simply because no travestie of costume, no change of condition, is so strikingly ludicrous as what we see on every side of us. The illiterate man with the revenue of a prince; the millionaire who cannot

write his name, and whom yesterday we saw as a navvy; the Emperor who, a few years back, lodged over the bootmaker's; the out-at-elbow followers of imperial fortune, now raised to the highest splendour, and dispensing hospitalities more than regal in magnificence;—these are the spectacles which make the masquerade a tiresome mockery; and it is exactly because we get the veritable article for nothing that we neither seek playhouse nor ballroom, but go out into the streets and highways for our drama, and take our Kembles and Macreadys as we find them at taverns, at railway-stations, on the grassy slopes of Malvern, or the breezy cliffs of Brighton. Once admit that the wild-flower plucked at random has more true delicacy of tint and elegance of form, and there is no going back to the tasteless mockery of artificial wax and wire. The broad boards of real life are the true stage; and he who cannot find matter of interest or amusement in the piece performed, may rely upon it that the cause is in himself, and not in the drama. Some will say, The world is just what it always was. People are no more fictitious now than at any other time. There was always, and there will be always, a certain amount of false pretension in life which you may, if you like, call acting. And to this I demur *in toto*, and assert that as every age has its peculiar stamp of military glory, or money-seeking, or religious fervour, or dissipation, or scientific discovery, or unprofitable trifling, so the mark of our own time will be found to be its thorough unreality. Every one is in travestie. Selfishness is got up to play philanthropy, apathy to perform zeal, intense self-seeking goes in for love of country; and, to crown all, one of the most ordinary

and vulgar minds of all Europe now directs and disposes of the fate and fortunes of all Christendom.

Daily habit familiarizes us with the acting of the barrister. His generous trustfulness, his love of all that is good, his scorn for Vice, his noble pity, and the withering sarcasm with which he scathes the ill-doer, we know, can be had, in common cases, for ten pounds ten shillings ; and five times as much will enlist in our service the same qualities in a less diluted form ; while, by quadrupling the latter sum, we arrive at a self-devotion before which brotherly love pales, and old friendships seem a cold and selfish indifferentism. We had contracted for this man's acuteness, his subtlety, his quick perception, and his ready-wittedness ; but he gives, besides these, his hearty trustfulness, his faith in our honour, his conviction in our integrity : he knows our motives ; he has been inside our bosom, and comes out to declare that all is pure and spotless there ; and he does this with a trembling lip and a swelling throat, the sweat on his brow and the tear in his eye, it being all the while a matter of mere accident that he had not been engaged on the opposite side, and all the love he bears us been "briefed" for the defendant.

Look at the physician, too. Who is it, then, enters the sick-room with the footfall of a cat, and draws our curtain as gently as a zephyr might stir a rose-leaf, whose tender accents fall softly on our ear, and who asks with the fondest anxiety how we have passed the night ? Who is it that cheers, consoles, encourages, and supports us ? Who associates himself with our sufferings, and winces under our pain, and as suddenly rallies as we grow better, and joins in

our little sickbed drolleries? Who does all these?—a consummate actor, who takes from thirty to forty daily “benefits,” and whose performances are paid at a guinea a scene!

The candidate on the hustings, the Government commissioner on his tour of inspection, the vicar-general of my lord bishop, the admiral on his station, the minister at the grand-ducal Court, are all good specimens of common acting—parts which can be filled with very ordinary capacities, and not above the powers of everyday artists. They conjugate but one verb, and on its moods and tenses they trade to the end of the chapter. These men never soar into the heroic regions of the drama; they infuse no imagination into their parts. They are as unpoetical as a lord-in-waiting. There are but two stops on their organ. They are bland, or they are overbearing; they are either beautifully gentle, or they are terrible in their wrath.

It is a strange feature of our age that the highest walk of the real-life drama should be given up to the men of money, and that Finance should be the most suggestive of all that is creative, fanciful, and imaginative. What a commentary on our era! It is no paradox I pronounce here. The greatest actor I ever saw, the most consummate artist, was a railroad contractor; that is, he had more persuasiveness, more of that magnetic captivation which subordinates reason to mere hope, than any one I ever listened to. He scorned the pictorial, he despised all landscape effects, he summoned to his aid no assistance from gorge or mountain, no deep-bosomed wood or bright eddying river; he was a man of culverts and cuttings, of quartz and

limestone and flint; with a glance he could estimate traffic, and with the speed of the lightning-flash tell you what dividend could come of the shares.

It was, however, in results that he was grandiose. Hear him on the theme of a completed line, a newly-opened tunnel, or a finished viaduct—it was a Poem! Such a picture of gushing beatitude as he could paint! It was the golden age—prosperity, happiness, and peace on every side; the song of the husbandman at his plough mingling with the hum of the village school; the thousand forms of civilization, from cheap sugar to penny serials, that would permeate the land; the peasant studying social science over his tea, and the railway-guard supping his “cheap Gladstone” as he speculated on the Antiquity of Man. Never was such an Eden on earth, and all to be accomplished at the cost of a mere million or two, with a “limited liability.”

With what a grand contempt this great man talked of the people who busied themselves in the visionary pursuits of politics or literature, or who devoted themselves to the Arts or Field-sports! With him earth-works were the grandest achievements of humanity, and there was no such civilizer as a parliamentary train. Had he been simply an enthusiast, that fatal false logic that *will* track enthusiasm—however it be guided—would have betrayed him: but the man was not an enthusiast—he was a great actor; and while to capitalists and speculators he appealed by all the seductive inducements of profits, premiums, and preference shares, to the outer and unmoneyed world he made his approaches by a beautiful and touching philanthropy.

Did he believe in all this? Heaven knows. He talked and acted as if he did; and though, when I last saw him, he had smashed his banker, ruined his company, and beggared the shareholders, he was high-hearted, hopeful, and buoyant as ever. It was a general who had lost a battle, but he meant to recruit another army. It was some accidental rumour of a war—some stupid disturbance on the Danube or the Black Sea—that had frightened capital and made “money tight.” The scheme itself was a glorious project—an unrivalled investment. Never was there such a paying line—innumerable towns, filled with a most migratory population, ever on the move, and only needing to learn the use of certain luxuries to be constantly in demand of them.

With a good harvest, however, and money easy, if Lord Russell could only be commonly civil to the Continental Cabinets, all would go well yet. The bounties of Providence would be diffused over the earth—food would be cheap, taxation reduced, labour plenty, and “then, sir, these worthy people shall have their line, if I die for it.”

I find it very hard to believe in Romeo’s love or Othello’s jealousy. I cannot, let me do all that I will, accept them as real, even in their most impassioned moments, and yet this other man holds me captive. If I had a hundred pounds in the world, I’d put it into his scheme, and I really feel that, in not borrowing the money to make a venture, I am a poor-spirited creature that has not the courage to win his way to fortune.

And yet these fellows have no aid from dress or make-up. They are not surrounded with all the



appliances that aid a deception. They come to us in their everyday apparel, and, mayhap, at inopportune moments, when we are weary, or busy, or out of sorts, to talk of what we are not interested in, and have no relish for. With their marvellous tact they conquer apathy and overcome repugnance; they gain a hearing, and they obtain at least time for more. There is much in what they say that we feel no interest in; but now and then they *do* touch a chord that vibrates within us; and when they do so, it is like magic the instinct with which they know it. It was that Roman camp, that lead-mine, that trout-stream, or that paper-mill, did the thing, and the rogue saw it as plainly as if he had a peep into our brain, and could read our thoughts like a printed book. These then, I say, are the truly great actors, who walk the boards of life with unwritten parts, who are the masters of our emotions, even to the extent of taking away our money, and who demand our trustfulness as a right not to be denied them.

Now, what a poor piece of mockery, of false tinsel and fringe and folly and pretence, is your stage-player beside one of these fellows! Who is going to sit three weary hours at the Haymarket, bored by the assumed plausibility of the actor, when the real, the actual, the positive thing that he so poorly simulates is to be met on the railroad, at the station, in the club, on the chain-pier, or the penny steamer? Is there any one, I ask, who will pay to see the plaster-cast when he can behold the marble original for nothing? You say, "Are you going to the masquerade?" and I answer, "I am at it." *Circumspice!* Look at the mock royalties hunting (Louis XIV. fashion) in the deep woods of Fontainebleau. Look at haughty lords and ladies—the haugh-

tiest the earth has ever seen—vying in public testimonies of homage—as we saw a few days ago—to the very qualities that, if they mean anything, mean the subversion of their order. Look at the wasteful abundance of a prison dietary, and the laudable economy which half-starves the workhouse. Look at the famished curate, with little beyond Greek roots to support him, and see the millionaire, who can but write his name, with a princely fortune ; and do you want Webster or Buckstone to give these “ characters ” more point ?

Will you take a box for the “ *Comedy of Errors*,” when you can walk into the Chancery Court for nothing ? Will you pay for “ *Much Ado about Nothing*,” when a friendly order can admit you to the House ? And as for a “ *New Way to Pay Old Debts*,” commend me to Commissioner Goulburn in Bankruptcy ; while “ *Love’s Last Shift* ” is daily performed at the Court of Probate, under the distinguished patronage of Judge Wilde. Is there any need to puzzle one’s head over the decline of the drama, then ? You might as well ask if a moderate smoker will pay exorbitantly for dried cabbage-leaves, when he can have prime Cubans for the trouble of taking them !

## A GRUMBLE.

I WONDER is the world as pleasant as it used to be? Not to myself, of course—I neither ask nor expect it; but I mean to those who are in the same position to enjoy it as I was — years ago. I am delicate about the figures, for Mrs. O'D. occasionally reads these sketches, and might feel a wifelike antipathy to a record of this nature. I repeat—I wonder is life as good fun as it was when I made my first acquaintance with it? My impression is that it is not. I do not presume to say that all the same elements are not as abundant as heretofore. There are young people, and witty people, and, better, there are beautiful people, in abundance. There are great houses as of yore, maintained, perhaps, with even more than bygone splendour: the horses are as good—the dogs as good—the trout-streams as well stocked—the grouse as abundant—foreign travel is more easy—all travel is more facile—there are more books and more illustrated newspapers; and yet, with all these advantages—very tangible advantages too—I do not think the present occupants make the house as pleasant as their fathers did, and for the very simple reason, that they never try.

Indifferentism is the tone of the day. No one must

be eager, pleased, displeased, interested, or anxious about anything. Life is to be treated as a tiresome sort of thing, but which is far too much beneath one to be thought of seriously—a wearisome performance which good manners require you should sit out, though nothing obliges you to applaud or even approve of it. This is the theory, and we have been most successful in reducing it to practice. We are immensely bored, and we take good care so shall be our neighbour. Just as we have voted that there is nothing new, nothing strange, nothing amusing, we defy any one to differ with us, on pain of pronouncing him vulgar. North American Indians are not more case-hardened against any show, of suffering under torture than are our well-bred people against any manifestation of showing pleasure in anything. “It wasn’t bad,” is about the highest expression of our praise; and I doubt if we would accord more to heaven—if we got there. The grand test of your modern Englishman is, to bear any amount of amusement without wincing: no pleasure is to wring a smile from him, nor is any expectancy to interest, or any unlooked-for event to astonish. He would admit that the “Governor”—meaning his father—was surprised; he would concede the fact, as recording some prejudice of a bygone age. As the tone of manners and observance has grown universal, so has the very expression of the features. They are intensely like each other. We are told that a shepherd will know the actual faces of all the sheep in his flock, distinguishing each from each at a glance. I am curious to know if the Bishop of London knows even the few lost sheep that browse about Rotten Row of an afternoon, and who are so familiar to us in Leech’s sketches. There they are—whiskered,

bearded, and bored ; fine-looking animals in their way, but just as much living creatures in *Punch* as they are yonder. It is said that they only want the stimulus of a necessity, something of daring to attempt, or something of difficulty to provoke them, to be just as bold and energetic as ever their fathers were. I don't deny it. I am only complaining of the system which makes sheep of them, reduces life to a dreary table-land, making the stupid fellows the standard, and coming down to their level for the sake of uniformity. Formerly they who had more wit, more smartness, more worldly knowledge than their neighbours, enjoyed a certain pre-eminence ; the flash of their agreeability lighted up the group they talked in, and they were valued and sought after. Now the very homage rendered, even in this small way, was at least a testimony that superiority was recognized and its claims admitted. What is the case now ? Apathy is excellence, and the nearest approach to insensibility is the greatest eminence attainable.

In the Regency, when George IV was Prince, the clever talkers certainly abounded ; and men talk well or ill exactly as there is a demand for the article. The wittiest conversationalist that ever existed would be powerless in a circle of these modern "Unsurprised ones." Their vacant self-possession would put down all the Grattans and Currans and Jeffreys and Sydney Smiths in the world. I defy the most brilliant, the readiest, the most genial of talkers to vivify the mass of inert dulness he will find now at every dinner and in every drawing-room.

The code of modern manners is to make ease the first of all objects ; and, in order that the stupidest man may be at his ease, the ablest is to be sacrificed. He

who could bring vast stores of agreeability to the common stock must not show his wares, because there are a store of incapables who have nothing for the market.

They have a saying in Donegal, that "the water is so strong it requires two whiskies;" but I would ask what amount of "spirits" would enliven this dreariness; what infusion of pleasantry would make Brown and Jones endurable when multiplied by what algebraists call an  $x$ —an unknown quantity—of other Browns and Joneses?

We are constantly calling attention to the fact of the influence exerted over morals and manners in France by the prevailing tone of the lighter literature, and we mark the increasing licentiousness that has followed such works as those of Eugene Sue and the younger Dumas. Let us not forget to look at home, and see if, in the days when the Waverleys constituted almost all our lighter reading, the tone of society was not higher, the spirit more heroic, the current of thought and expression purer, than in these realistic days, when we turn for amusement to descriptions of every quaint vulgarity that makes up the life of the boarding-house or the strolling theatre.

The glorious heroism of Scott's novels was a fine stream to turn into the turbid river of our worldliness and money-seeking. It was of incalculable benefit to give men even a passing glance of noble devotion, high-hearted courage, and unsullied purity.

I can remember the time when, as freshmen in our first year, we went about talking to each other of "Ivanhoe" and "Kenilworth;" and I can remember, too, when the glorious spirit of those novels had so possessed us, that our romance elevated and warmed us to an unconscious imitation of the noble thoughts and deeds we had been reading.

Smile if you like at our boyish enthusiasm, it was better than the mocking spirit engendered by all this realism, or the insensate craving after stimulus taught by sensation novels.

Now, I am not old enough to remember the great talkers of the time when George III. was King, or those who made Carlton House famous ; but I belonged to a generation where these men were remembered, and where it was common enough to hear stories of their Attic nights, those *noctes cœnæque deorum* which really in brilliancy must have far transcended anything that Europe could boast of conversational power. The youth of the time I speak of were full of these traditions. " If I am not the rose, I grew near one," was no foolish boast ; and certainly there was both in the tone of conversation and the temper of society a sentiment that showed how the great men had influenced their age, and how, even after their sun had gone down, a warm tint remained to remind the world of the glorious splendour that had departed.

Being an Irishman, it is to Ireland I must go for my illustration, and it is my pride to remember that I have seen some of those who were, in an age of no common convivial excellence, amongst the first and the greatest. They are gone, and I may speak of them by name—Lord Plunkett, the Chief-Justice Bushe, Mr. Casey, Sir Philip Crampton, Barré Beresford—I need not go on. I have but to recall the leading men at the bar, to make up a list of the most brilliant talkers that ever delighted society. Nor was the soil exhausted with these ; there came, so to say, a second crop—a younger order of men—less versed in affairs, it is true, less imbued with that vigorous conviviality that prevailed in their fathers'

days—but of these I must not speak, for they have now grown up to great dignities and stations, they have risen to eminence and honour and repute, and might possibly be ashamed if it were known that they were once so agreeable. Let me, however, record one who is no more, but who possessed the charm of companionship to a degree I never knew equalled in all my varied experiences of life,—one who could bring the stores of a well-stocked mind, rich in scholarship, to bear upon any passing incident, blended with the fascination of a manner that was irresistible. Highly imaginative, and with a power of expression that was positively marvellous, he gave to ordinary conversation an elevation that actually conferred honour on those who were associated with it; and high above all these gifts and graces, a noble nature, generous, hopeful, and confiding. With an intellect that challenged any rivalry, he had, in all that touched worldly matters, the simplicity of a child. To my countrymen it is needless I should tell of whom I speak; to others, I say his name was Mortimer O'Sullivan. The mellow cadence of his winning voice, the beam of his honest eye, the generous smile that never knew scorn, are all before me as I write, and I will write no more.



## OF OUR BROTHERS BEYOND THE BORDER.

THERE is a story current of a certain very eminent French naturalist, who is so profoundly impressed by the truth of the Darwinian theory, that he never passes the cage where the larger apes are confined in the Jardin des Plantes without taking off his hat, making a profound obeisance, and wishing them a *bon jour*.

This recognition is touching and graceful. The homage of the witches to him who should be king hereafter, had in it a sort of mockery that made it horrible ; but here we have an act of generous courtesy, based alike on the highest discoveries of science and the rules of the truest good-breeding.

The learned professor, with all the instincts of great acquirements and much self-knowledge united, admits them at once to equality and fraternity—the liberty, perhaps, they will have to wait some time for ; but in that they are no worse off than some millions of their fellow-countrymen.

One might speculate long—I don't know exactly how profitably—on the sense of gratitude these creatures must feel for this touching kindness, how they must long for the good man's visit, how they must

wonder by what steps he arrived at this astonishing knowledge, how surprised they must feel that he does not make more converts ; and, last of all, what pains they must take to exhibit in their outward bearing and behaviour that they are not unworthy of the high consideration he bestows on them ! Before him no monkey-tricks, no apish indecorums—none even of those passing levities which young gorillas will indulge in just like other youths. No ; all must be staid, orderly, and respectful—heads held well up—hands at rest—tails nowhere ; in fact, a port and bearing that would defy the most scrutinizing observer to say that they were less eligible company than that he had just quitted at the café.

I own I have not seen them during the moment of the Professor's passage. I am unable to state authentically whether all this be as I surmise, but I have a strong impression it must be. Indeed, reflecting on the habits and modes of the species, I should be rather disposed to believe them given to an exuberant show of gratitude than to anything like indifference, and expect to witness demonstrations of delight more natural possibly than graceful.

Now, I have not the most remote intention of impugning the Professor's honesty. I give him credit—full credit—for high purpose, and for high courage. "These poor brothers of ours," says he, "have tails, it is true, and they have not the *hypocampus major* ; but let me ask you, Monsieur le Duc, or you, Monseigneur the Archbishop, will you dare to affirm on oath that you yourself are endowed with a *hypocampus major* or minor ? Are you prepared to stand forward and declare that the convolutions of your brain are of the

regulation standard—that the medullary part is not disproportioned to the cincritious—that your falx is not thicker or thinner than it ought—and that your optic thalami are not too prominent? And if you are not ready to do this, what avails all your assumption of superiority? In these—they are not many—lie the alleged differences between you and your caged cousins yonder.” Thus speaks, or might speak, the Professor; and, I repeat, I respect his candour; but still I would venture to submit one small, perhaps ungenerous doubt, and ask, Would he, acting on the noble instincts that move him, vote these creatures an immediate and entire emancipation, or would he not rather wait a while—a few years, say—till the habit of sitting on chairs had worn off some of the tail, and a greater familiarity with society suggested not to store up their dinner in their jaws? Would he like to see them at once take their places in public life, become public functionaries, and ministers, and grand cordons?

Would he not rather, with that philosophy his country eminently teaches, say, “I will do the pity and the compassion. To me be the sympathetic part of a graceful sorrow. To posterity I bequeath the recognition of these poor captives. Let them be liberated, by all means, but let it be when I shall be no longer here to witness it. Let others face that glorious millennium of gorilla greatness.”

I am afraid he would reason in this fashion; it is one thing to have an opinion, and to have what Frenchmen call “the courage of your opinion.” He would say, “If Nature work surely, she works slowly; her changes are measured, regular, and progressive. With her there are no paroxysms; all is orderly—all is

gradual. It took centuries of centuries to advance these poor creatures to the point they occupy; their next stage on the journey is perhaps countless years away. I will not attempt to forestall what I cannot assist. I will let Time do its work. They are not ill-treated, besides; that large creature with the yellow eyebrows grinned at me very pleasantly this morning, and the she ourang-outang was whipping her infant most naturally as I came by."

"What a cold-blooded philanthropy is this!" cries another. "You say these are our brothers and our kinsmen; you declare that anatomy only can detect some small and insignificant discrepancies between us, and that even in these there are some of whose functions we know nothing, and others, such as the prehensile power, where the ape has the best of it. What do you mean by keeping them there 'cribbed, cabined, and confined?' Is a slight frontal inclination to disqualify a person from being a prefect? Is an additional joint in the coccyx to prevent a man sitting on the woolsack, or an extra inch in the astragalus to interfere with his wearing spurs? If there be minute differences between us, intercourse will abolish them. It will be of inestimable service to yourselves to come into contact with these fresh, fine, generous natures, uncontaminated by the vices of an effete and worn-out civilization. Great as are the benefits you extend to them, they will repay you tenfold in the advantages to yourselves. Away with your unworthy prejudices about a 'black pigment' and long heels! Take them to your hearts and your hearths. You will find them brave—ay, braver than your own race. Their teeth are whiter and their nails longer; there is not a relation

in life in which you will dare to call yourself their better."

I will go no farther, not merely because I have no liking for my theme, but because I am pilfering. All these arguments—the very words themselves—I have stolen from an American writer, who, in Horace Greeley fashion, is addressing his countrymen on the subject of negro equality. He not alone professes to show the humanity of the project, but its policy—its even necessity. He declares to the whites, "You want these people; without them you will sink lower and lower into that effete degeneracy into which years of licentiousness have sunk you. These gorillas—black men, I mean—are virtuous; they are abstemious; they have a little smell, but no sensuality; they will make admirable wives for your warriors; and who knows but one may be the mother of a President as strikingly handsome as Ape Lincoln himself!" There is no doubt much to be said for our long-heeled friends, whether with or without a hypocampus major. I am not very certain that we compliment them in the best taste when the handsomest thing we can say of them is, that they are very like ourselves! It is our human mode, however, of expressing admiration, and resembles the exclamation of the Oberland peasant on seeing a pretty girl, "How handsome she'd be if she only had a *goutre*!"

## THE RULE NISI.

A GREAT many sea-captains discourage the use of life-preservers and floating-belts on board ships of war, on the simple ground that men should not be taught to rely for their safety on anything but what conduces to save the ship. "Let there be but one thought, one effort," say they, "and let that be for the common safety." If they be right—and I suspect they are—we have made a famous blunder by our late legislation about divorce. Of all the crafts that ever were launched, marriage is one from which fewest facilities of desertion should be provided.

Romanism makes very few mistakes in worldly matters. There is no feature of that Church so remarkable as its deep study and thorough acquaintance with all the moods and wants and wishes of humanity. Whatever its demerits, one cannot but admit that no other religion ever approached it in intimacy with the human heart in all its emotions, and in all its strivings, whether for good or evil.

Rome declares against all breach of the marriage tie. The Church, with a spirit of concession it knows how to carry through all its dealings, modifies, softens, assuages, but never severs, conjugalism. It makes the

tie occasionally a slip-knot, but it never cuts the string, and I strongly suspect that it is wise in its legislation.

For a great many years we gave the policy that amount of imitation we are wont to accord to Romanist practices; that is, we follow them in part—we adopt the coat, but, to show that we are not mere imitators, we cut off one of the skirts; and if we do not make the garment more graceful, we at least consult our dignity, and that is something. We make divorce the privilege of men rich enough to come to Parliament for relief; we did with the question what some one proposed we should do with poisons—make them so costly that only wealthy men should be able to afford the luxury of suicide. So long as men believed that divorce was immoral, I don't think any one complained that it should be limited to persons in affluence. We are a lord-loving race, we English, and are quite ready to concede that our superiors should have more vices than ourselves, just as they have more horses and more pheasants; and we deemed it nothing odd or strange that he, whose right it was to walk into the House of Peers, should walk out of matrimony when it suited him.

Who knows?—perhaps we were flattered by the thought that great folk so far conceded to a vulgar prejudice as to marry at all. Perhaps we hailed their entrance into conjugalism as we are wont to do their appearance at a circus or a public garden—a graceful acknowledgment that they occasionally felt something like ourselves: at all events, we liked it, and we showed we liked it by the zeal with which we read those descriptions in newspapers of marriages in high life, and the delight with which we talked to each other of

people we never saw, nor probably ever should see. It was not too much, therefore, to concede to them this privilege of escape. It was very condescending of them to come to the play at all; we had no right to insist that they should sit out the whole performance.

By degrees, however, what with rich cotton-lords, and cheap cyclopædias, and penny trains, and popular lectures, there got up a sort of impression—it was mere impression for a long time—that great folk had more than their share of the puddings' plums; and agitators began to bestir themselves. What were the privileges of the higher classes which would sit most gracefully on their inferiors? Naturally we bethought us of their vices. It was not always so easy to adopt my lord's urbanity, his unassuming dignity, his well-bred ease; but one might reasonably aspire to be as wicked. Sabbath-breaking had long since ceased to be the privilege of the better classes, and so men's minds reverted to the question of divorce. "Let us get rid of our wives!" cried they; "who knows but the day may come when we shall kill woodcocks?"

Now the law, in making divorce a very costly process, had simply desired to secure its infrequency. It was not really meant to be a rich man's privilege. What was sought for was to oppose as many obstacles as could be found, to throw in as many rocks as possible into the channel, so that only he who was intently bent on navigating the stream would ever have the energy to clear the passage. Nobody ever dreamed of making it an open roadstead. In point of fact, the oft-boasted equality before the law is a myth. The penalty which a labourer could endure without hardship might break my lord's heart; and in the very case before us of



divorce, nothing can possibly be more variable than the estimate formed of the divorced individuals, according to the class of society they move in. What would be a levity here, would be a serious immorality there ; and a little lower down again, a mere domestic arrangement, slightly more decorous and a shade more legal than the old system of the halter and the public sale. It was declared, however, that this "relief"—that is the popular phrase in such matters—should be extended to the poor man. It was decided that the privilege to get rid of a wife was, as Mr. Gladstone says of the electoral right, the inalienable claim of a freeman, and the only course was to lower the franchise.

Let us own, too, we were ashamed, as we had good right to be ashamed, of our old *crim. con.* law. Foreigners, especially Frenchmen, had rung the changes on our coarse venality and corruption ; and we had come to perceive—it took some time, though—that moneyed damages were scarcely the appropriate remedy for injured honour.

Last of all, free-trade notions had turned all our heads ; we were for getting rid of all restrictions on every side ; and we went about repeating to each other those wise saws about buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market, and having whatever we wanted, and doing whatever we liked with our own. We are, there is no denying it, a nation of shopkeepers ; and the spirit of trade can be tracked through every relation of our lives. It is commerce gives the tone to all our dealings ; and we have carried its enactments into the most sacred of all our institutions, and imparted a "limited liability" even to marriage.

Cheapness became the desideratum of our age.

We insisted on cheap gloves and shoes and wine and ribbons, and why not cheap divorces? Philosophers tell us that the alternate action of the seasons is one of the purest and most enduring of all sources of enjoyment; that perpetual summer or spring would weary and depress; but in the ever-changing aspect of nature, and in the stimulation which diversity excites, we find an unfailing gratification. If, therefore, it be pleasant to be married, it may also be agreeable to be unmarried. It takes some time, however, before society accommodates itself to these new notions. The newly divorced, be it man or woman, comes into the world like a patient after the smallpox—you are not quite certain whether the period of contagion is past, or if it be perfectly safe to go up and talk to him. In fact, you delay doing so till some strong-minded friend or other goes boldly forward and shakes the convalescent by the hand. Even still there will be timid people who know perhaps that their delicacy of constitution renders them peculiarly sensitive, and who will keep aloof after all. Of course, these and similar prejudices will give way to time. We have our Probate Court; and the phrase *co-respondent* is now familiar as a household word.

Now, however tempting the theme, I am not going to inquire whether we have done wisely or the reverse by this piece of legislation; whether, by instilling certain precepts of self-control, a larger spirit of accommodation, and a more conciliatory disposition generally, we might have removed some of the difficulties without the heroic remedy of the decree *nisi*; whether, in fact, it might not have been better to teach people

to swim, or even float, rather than make this great issue of cheap life-belts. I am so practical that I rather address myself to profit by what is, than endeavour by any change to make it better. We live in a statistical age. We are eternally inquiring who it is wants this, who consumes that, who goes to such a place, who is liable to this or that malady. Classification is a passion with us; and we have bulky volumes to teach us what sorts of people have chest affections, what are most prone to stomachic diseases, who have ophthalmia, and who the gout. We are also instructed as to the kind of persons most disposed to insanity, and we have a copious list of occupations given us which more or less incline those who profess them to derangement. Even the Civil-Service Examiners have contributed their share to this mass of entertaining knowledge, and shown from what parts of the kingdom bad spellers habitually come, what counties are celebrated for cacography, and in what districts etymology is an unknown thing. Would it not, then, be a most interesting and instructive statistic that would give us a tabular view of divorce, showing in what classes frailty chiefly prevailed, with the relative sexes, and also a glimpse at the ages? Imagine what a light the statement would throw on the morality of classes, and what an incalculable benefit to parents in the choice of a career for their children! For instance, no sensible father would select a life of out-door exposure for a weak-chested son, or make a sailor of one with an incurable sea-sickness. In the same way would he be guided by the character of his children as to the perils certain careers would expose them to.

A passing glance at the lists of divorce shows us

that no "promovent"—it is a delicate title, and I like it—no promovent figures oftener than a civil engineer. Now, how instructive to inquire why!

What is there in embankments and earthworks and culverts that should dispose the wife of him who makes them to infidelity? Why should a tunnel only lead to domestic treachery? why must a cutting sever the heart that designs it? I do not know; I cannot even guess. My ingenuity stands stockstill at the question, and I can only re-echo, Why?

Next amongst the "predisposed" come school-masters, plasterers, etc. What unseen thread runs through the woof of these natures, apparently so little alike? It is the boast of modern science to settle much that once was puzzling, and reconcile to a system what formerly appeared discordant. How I wish some great Babbage-like intellect would bestir itself in this inquiry.

Surely ethical questions are as well worthy of investigation as purely physical or mechanical ones, and yet we ignore them most ignominiously. We think no expense too great to test an Armstrong or a Whitworth gun; we spend thousands to ascertain how far it will carry, what destructive force it possesses, and how long it will resist explosion;—why not appoint a commission of this nature on "conjugals;" why not ascertain, if we can, what is the weak point in matrimony, and why are explosions so frequent? Is the "cast" system a bad one, and must we pronounce "welding" a failure? or, last of all, however wounding to our national vanity, do "they understand these things better in France"?

## LINGUISTS.

THERE are two classes of people not a little thought of, and even caressed, in society, and for whom I have ever felt a very humble estimate—the men who play all manner of games, and the men who speak several languages. I begin with the latter, and declare that, after a somewhat varied experience of life, I never met a linguist that was above a third-rate man ; and I go farther, and aver, that I never chanced upon a really able man who had the talent for languages.

I am well aware that it sounds something little short of a heresy to make this declaration. It is enough to make the blood of Civil-Service Commissioners run cold to hear it. It sounds illiberal—and, worse, it seems illogical. Why should any intellectual development imply deficiency ? Why should an acquirement argue a defect ? I answer, I don't know—any more than I know why sanguineous people are hot-tempered, and leuco-phlegmatic ones are more brooding in their wrath. If—for I do not ask to be anything higher than empirical—if I find that parsimonious people have generally thin noses, and that the snub is associated with the spendthrift, I never trouble myself with the demonstration, but I hug the fact, and

endeavour to apply it. In the same spirit, if I hear a man in a salon change from French to German and thence diverge into Italian and Spanish, with possibly a brief excursion into something Scandinavian or Slav—at home in each and all—I would no more think of associating him in my mind with anything responsible in station or commanding in intellect, than I should think of connecting the servant that announced me with the last brilliant paper in the *Quarterly*.

No man with a strongly-marked identity—and no really able man ever existed without such—can subordinate that identity so far as to put on the foreigner ; and without this he never can obtain that mastery of a foreign language that makes the linguist. To be able to repeat conventionalities—bringing them in at the telling moment, adjusting phrases to emergencies, as a joiner adapts the pieces of wood to his carpentry—may be, and is, a very neat and a very dexterous performance, but it is scarcely the exercise to which a large capacity will address itself. Imitation must be, in one sense or other, the stronghold of the linguist—imitation of expression, of style, of accent, of cadence, of tone. The linguist must not merely master grammar, but he must manage gutturals. The mimicry must go farther : in simulating expression it must affect the sentiment. You are not merely borrowing the clothes, but you are pretending to put on the feelings, the thoughts, the prejudices of the wearer. Now, what man with a strong nature can merge himself so entirely in his fictitious being as not to burst the seams and tear the lining of a garment that only impedes the free action of his limbs, and actually threatens the very extinction of his respiration ?

It is not merely by their greater adaptiveness that women are better linguists than men ; it is by their more delicate organization, their more subdued identity, and their less obstreperous temperaments, which are consequently less egotistical, less redolent of the one individual self. And what is it that makes the men of mark or note, the cognate signs of human algebra, but these same characteristics ; not always good, not always pleasant, not always genial, but always associated with something that declares pre-eminence, and pronounces their owner to be a "representative man" ?

When Lord Ward replied to Prince Schwartzberg's flippant remark on the bad French of English diplomatists by the apology, "that we had not enjoyed the advantage of having our capital cities so often occupied by French troops as some of our neighbours," he uttered not merely a smart epigram but a great philosophical truth. It was not alone that we had not possessed the opportunity to pick up an accent, but that we had not subordinated our minds and habits to French modes and ways of thought, and that the tone and temper of the French people had not been beaten into us by the roll of a French drum. One may buy an accomplishment too dearly. It is possible to pay too much even for a Parisian pronunciation ! Not only have I never found a linguist a man of eminence, but I have never seen a linguist who talked well. Fluent they are, of course. Like the Stecknadel gun of the Prussians, they can fire without cessation, but, like the same weapon, they are comparatively aimless. It is a *feu roulant*, with plenty of noise and some smoke, but very "few casualties" announce the success. The greatest linguist of modern Europe,

Mezzofanti, was a most inferior man. Of the countries whose dialect he spoke to perfection, he knew nothing. An old dictionary would have been to the full as companionable. I find it very hard not to be personal just now, and give a list—it would be a long one—of all the tiresome people I know, who talk four, five, some of them six modern languages perfectly. It is only with an effort I abstain from mentioning the names of some well-known men who are the charming people at Rome and Vienna every winter, and each summer are the delight of Ems, of Berlin, and of Ischl. What tyrants these fellows are, too, over the men who have not got their gift of tongues! how they out-talk them and overbear them! with what an insolent confidence they fall back upon the petty superiority of their fluency, and lord it over those who are immeasurably their masters! Just as Blondin might run along the rigging of a three-decker, and pretend that his agility entitled him to command a squadron!

Nothing, besides, is more imposing than the mock eloquence of good French. The language in itself is so adaptive, it is so felicitous, it abounds in such innumerable pleasant little analogies, such nice conceits and suggestive drolleries, that he who acquires these has at will a whole armoury of attack and defence. It actually requires years of habit to accustom us to a display that we come at last to discover implies no brilliancy whatever in him who exhibits, though it argues immense resources in the treasury from which he derives this wealth.

I have known scores of delightful talkers—Frenchmen—who had no other charm than what their language lent them. They were neither profound, nor



cultivated, nor witty—some were not even shrewd or acute ; but all were pleasant—pleasant in the use of a conversational medium, of which the world has not the equal—a language that has its set form of expression for every social eventuality, and that hits to a nicety every contingency of the “salon ;” for it is no more the language of natural people than the essence of the perfumer’s shop is the odour of a field flower. It is pre-eminently the medium of people who talk with tall glasses before them, and an incense of truffles around them, and well-dressed women—clever and witty, and not over scrupulous in their opinions—for their company. Then, French is unapproachable ; English would be totally unsuited to the occasion, and German even more so. There is a flavour of sauer kraut about that unhappy tongue that would vulgarize a Queen if she talked it.

To attain, therefore, the turns and tricks of this language—for it is a Chinese puzzle in its involvements—what a life must a man have led ! What “terms” he must have “put in” at cafés and restaurants ! What seasons at small theatres—tripots and worse ! What nights at bals masqués, Chateaux des Fleurs, and Cadrans rouges et bleus ! What doubtful company he must have often kept ! What company a little more than doubtful occasionally ! What iniquities of French romance must he have read, with all the cardinal virtues arrayed as the evil destinies of humanity, and every wickedness paraded as that natural expansion of the heart which alone raises man above the condition of the brute ! I ask, if proficiency must imply profligacy, would you not rather find a man break down in his verbs than in his virtue ? Would

you not prefer a little inaccuracy in his declensions to a total forgetfulness of the decalogue? And, lastly of all, what man of real eminence could have masqueraded—for it is masquerading—for years in this motley, and come out, after all, with even a rag of his identity?

Many people would scruple to play at cards with a stranger whose mode of dealing and general manipulation of the pack bespoke daily familiarity with the play-table. They would infer that he was a regular and professional gambler. In the very same way, and for the self-same reason, would I carefully avoid any close intimacy with the Englishman of fluent French, well knowing he could not have graduated in that perfection save at a certain price. But it is not at the moral aspect of the question I desire particularly to look. I assert—and I repeat my assertion—that these talkers of many tongues are poor creatures. There is no initiative in them—they suggest nothing—they are vendors of second-hand wares, and are not always even good selectors of what they sell. It is only in narrative that they are at all endurable. They can *raconter*, certainly; and so long as they go from salon to salon repeating in set phrase some little misadventure or accident of the day, they are amusing; but this is not conversation, and they do not converse.

“Every time a man acquires a new language, is he a new man?” is supposed to have been a saying of Charles V.—a sentiment that, if he uttered it, means more of sarcasm than of praise; for it is the very putting off a man’s identity that establishes his weakness. All real force of character excludes dualism. Every eminent, every able man has a certain integrity in his nature that rejects this plasticity.

It is a very common habit, particularly with newspaper writers, to ascribe skill in languages, and occasionally in games, to distinguished people. It was but the other day we were told that Garibaldi spoke ten languages fluently. Now Garibaldi is not really master of two. He speaks French tolerably ; and his native language is not Italian, but a patois-Genoese. Cavour was called a linguist with almost as little truth ; but people repeat the story, just as they repeat that Napoleon I. was a great chess-player. If his statecraft and his strategy had been on a par with his chess, we should never have heard of Tilsit or Wagram.

Lord Castlereagh, the Duke of Wellington, and George Canning, each of whom administered our foreign policy with no small share of success, were not linguists ; and as to Charles Fox, he has left a French sentence on record that will last even as long as his own great name. I do not want to decry the study of languages ; I simply desire to affirm that linguists—and through all I have said I mean colloquial linguists—are for the most part poor creatures, not otherwise distinguished than by the gift of tongues ; and I want to protest against the undue pre-eminence accorded to the possessors of a small accomplishment, and the readiness with which the world, especially the world of society, awards homage to an acquirement in which a boarding-school Miss can surpass Lord Brougham. I mean to say a word or two about those who have skill in games ; but as they are of a higher order of intelligence, I'll wait till I have got " fresh wind " ere I treat of *them*.

## SERIALS AND THREE VOLUMES.

I LIKE what in our modern slang are called serial stories. The writers understand one requirement at least of their trade.—they do not give too much at a time; and in so far they resemble the heads of the profession, the old Eastern story-tellers, who only told the Caliph each evening enough to set him asleep. Now this alone is a great point.

Another advantage is this—they cannot cram into their limited space any of those long-winded descriptions, especially of scenery, which the three-volume people are so prone to inflict; neither have they so much of the page open to emotional expatiation. They are bound by their very limits to be more short, sharp, and decisive.

Lastly, they must endeavour to interest by something else than story—that is, they must try what can be done to amuse by humouristic views of life, shrewd touches of character, quaint pictures of people not the less recognizable that they are not met with every day, and occasionally—which Three Volume probably thinks beneath him—they must make us laugh.

In the very fact that the reader is not bound to them beyond the monthly part before him, lies their

heaviest obligation to interest him. It is like a shilling stage, and if you dislike the conveyance, or feel tired of the company, you can get out and walk home. For all these reasons I incline much to the serial.

I do not know how it may be with others, but for myself I am not over-grateful to the man who invests his story with that amount of interest that engrosses my attention too far, and in this way turns me from the real business of life to involve me in cares and sorrows that have no reality. I want to be amused by the novel pretty much as I feel amused by the play—that is, I want what will present a certain number of pictures to my mind without the cost of being obliged to retain them thereafter. If I be obliged to do this, the novel becomes a burthen, not a relaxation. I want, besides, the writer to let me so far into his mind that I may know what *he* thinks is droll, what strange, what picturesque, what attractive, what ridiculous. When I have arrived at that understanding—any one number will suffice for so much—I am able to guess if I should care for more of his company. The three-volume man affords me no such clue as this. All he is thinking of is his wind-up in the last volume. It is for the grand finish alone he cares; his heart, like the Irish postilion's, is fixed on keeping a "trot for the town." No matter how he stumbled and staggered during the stage, so that he comes up to the door at last with whip-cracking, and the jaded team spirited up to a lively tramp.

The serial writer, too, performs usually to a larger public, and, consequently, is less addicted to conventionalities than Three Volume, who has a more select few for his audience, and who could not so easily stoop

to the vulgarity of common people, and their ways and doings. But, as I have said already, the serial is more prone to make me laugh, and for this great gift I prize him most of all. I have very grave doubts if age has anything heavier in all its inflictions than in the difficulty—yearly increasing in a terrific ratio—the difficulty of enjoying a good laugh. For my own part, baldness, adiposity, and suchlike, are all lighter evils to me than the gravity I feel stealing over me, the little tolerance I have for small fun, and the growing conviction that the pleasant people have gone home, and that *I* am left to walk back with the dreary ones.

That my own capacity for the enjoyment is not totally blunted, I can test by seeing how the old racy humour of Molière and Cervantes—how Scott, too, and Sydney Smith continue to amuse me. What has become of this gift? is it gone and lost, like the art of painting on glass, like the glaze of Luca della Robbia, or the wonderful pottery-paste of Maestro Giorgio? One thing is certain, *Three Volume* has none of it; and, latterly, the serial has not more than enough to season his quality and remind you of by-gones. As nothing so much disgusts a man with wine-drinking as plying him for a while with bad liquor, so there is no such certain death to the appreciation of real humour as in the race of small jokers perpetually letting off a fire of petty drolleries suggested by the passing events of the hour. If there be a public for these, heaven help the real humourist when he craves an audience! That there *is* a public for them he would be a bold man that should deny, and a very large and a very faithful public, too!

I do not make a great demand on my novelist. I

ask him to help me through a stray hour of *ennui*, a dreary half-day of rainy weather in a dull house, the time I have to wait for my train, or the morning in which the post has either failed or brought nothing of any interest. I protest loudly and *in toto* against accepting the story-teller as either preacher or teacher. I will neither listen to him about law reform, nor prison discipline, nor madhouses, nor public schools. Let him, if he must, season his pages by the introduction of these institutions; but let him not insinuate his own theories about their management, or pretend to tell me how much more smoothly would suits in Equity go were he the Chancellor, or what a happy day would it be for the lunatics did the writer sit in Whitehall with the dignity of a Commissioner. I never heard an amateur fiddler that one would have given a sixpence to; and I have rarely seen one of those would-be reformers in fiction who approached his subject with even the vaguest knowledge of its details, or any conception of its difficulties. "Mark me, Mr. Vagabond," said Junius to Garrick, when the actor, forgetting his real province, had attempted a negotiation with the publisher to betray the name of the great satirist—"mark me, Mr. Vagabond; stick to your pantomimes."

I do not think there is anything so good in Alexandre Dumas as his total exemption from this vice. He never tries the didactic, and I respect him for his abstinence. Let not the clown, when he casts a somersault in the circus, tell me that he means to emblemize the motion of the earth! *Suum cuique*. Let the story-teller understand that his mission is simply to amuse without any outrage to good manners, or any

offence to good morals. Let him be as pleasant as he can, and leave the task of making the world better and wiser to men who have to accept the charge with heavier responsibilities than attach to tale-writing.

Scott understood something about his craft, and something about the world too. Had he deemed that fiction was the proper channel to instil correct notions about hospitals for the blind, drainage of towns, ragged schools, or reformatories, we should doubtless have had these and such-like discussed, though, perhaps, we might have lost something in not having the "*Antiquary*," "*Ivanhoe*," and a score more as good.

Balzac, also, wrote indifferent good novels, and knew one sort of life as few others ever did, and yet he never addressed himself to assail some institution or attack some system. He knew well that no group of people ever yet lived who revolved round *one* grievance; that life is a very parti-coloured affair, and, however a particular wrong may tinge existence, that the daily business of the world goes on amidst innumerable cares and troubles, and joys and anxieties, and it is of these fiction ought to treat, showing as truthfully as she can what human nature does, says, thinks, and endures, with very little reference to some great stumbling-block, which, after all, has hurt the shins of only one, perhaps, in the company.

That the ordinary business of life can go on amidst the most terrible convulsions, and men follow the pursuits of ambition, of pleasure, or of money-getting, unaffected by that great event which in history will absorb the whole page, will be readily acknowledged by any one who will turn to the memoirs of the years of the French Revolution, or the Magazines of Ireland



during '98. Jeffrey, in one of his essays, remarks on this, and says, that while posterity will be entirely occupied by the dreadful phantom of the Reign of Terror, nothing in the actual records of the time will record it.

It is hard to believe or to understand it, but the literature of France in those dreadful years ran upon idyls and odes and pastorals. Pastorals, when the creak of the *charrette* that carried the victims to the scaffold was the one sound heard in the streets! when the channels ran with blood, amidst the carnage of helpless women, and the *noyades* of the Loire! Pastorals! One is inclined to ask, Is it in ethics as in optics, and does the eye, gorged and inflamed by red, turn to seek repose, to rest upon green?

Now, if Fiction had to deal with this era, we should find the guillotine in every page. Every event and every action would revolve around the scaffold; the headsman everywhere—everywhere the axe: and what truth would there be in such a portraiture?

The Irish rebellion of '98 was, while it lasted, a dreadful scene of cruelty and carnage on all sides; and yet I have heard more stories of convivial gaiety, more narratives of country-house life and hospitality, of that period, than all I ever remember to have heard of any other time of Irish history.

Of what is now going on in America, let Wall Street and Fifth Avenue, in their respective spheres, tell, how much sympathy is felt for the countless thousands dying in every form of agony, or coming back, pitifully maimed and crippled, to drag out lives of suffering and penury! Fiction would doubtless paint New York breathless for the last news from the battle-

field ; and so it might, but not for the record of victory or defeat as a source of triumph or sorrow, but simply to know how it would affect the exchanges, or react on the price of gold.

To my thinking, " *Les Misérables* " is only a blue-book gone mad ; and a census return done by a sensational hand would be just as amusing reading as any of this school.

There is another practice of certain novelists which annoys me not a little—that is, to dish up the same characters either as principals or secondaries in every story. It is not merely objectionable on the ground that character-drawing is almost the best part of fiction, as it is certainly the most instructive ; but because there is such poverty in invention, or such inveterate indolence, implied in the practice. It is bad enough if a strolling company must perform " *Coriolanus* " with the same corps that gave the " *Road to Ruin* ; " and it is hard to surrender one's sympathy to Romeo, when he perpetually recalls Jeremy Diddler : still, these poor creatures do their utmost so to disguise their identities that you shall not detect them. Whereas, in the novel, it is the same dreary personage that broke your heart in the " *Three Crows*," that is now dogging your steps in " *Drivelling Manor* ; " and the Bore that cost you the thread of one story by your efforts to skip him, turns up in a totally different book to be your misery once more.

When Sancho was relating the memorable story of the shepherd to his master, he found himself suddenly arrested in his narrative by Don Quixote's inability to tell how many sheep had been ferried over the stream. " 'Fore God," said he, " if you have forgotten the score,

it is impossible for me to continue the story." These people are, however, more exacting still, for they call on you to bear in mind who was each person's father and mother, who their uncles and aunts and good friends. A name turns up suddenly in the story without any intimation who he is and whence he comes. You turn back to trace him; alas! it is to a story published the year before, and nine others dating successively as many years back, you must go—a labour that may possibly not be requited by any interest intended to surround him. In the reading of these books, if not well "posted" in all by the same author, and gifted with a retentive memory besides, a man feels like a *parvenu* suddenly introduced into a society where, except himself, each knows and is known to his neighbour. He has the humiliating consciousness that in a company so intimately united, he himself, the intruder, is *de trop*. He sees that every one knows the Duke of Allsorts, and that nobody is surprised when Lady Mumford appears, and he naturally concludes that he has no business in a society where he is the only one who has to inquire who are those around him. Why will not these writers give us with a new book a chronological table, and let us learn who begat whom?

But, in point of fact, the thing is harder than mere chronology—it is far more; it is the Darwinian theory applied to fiction, and the law of development introduced into tale-writing. The *homunculus* of some book of ten years ago may be the foreground figure of a later work; and the child you have scarcely noticed at one time, may have been developed into the grandmother of a present heroine.

This is simply intolerable. I ask for a story, and

you give me a census return ; I want a tale, and I get an extract from a baptismal registry.

There are a few characters of fiction, and really they are very few, that could not recur too often. It would be difficult to shut the door against Sancho, or Falstaff, or perhaps Dugald Dalgetty ; but have the writers I have just been speaking of given us any creations like these ? or are not their personages only real in the one respect, that they are as tiresome as living men ?

Let me record one splendid exception from this judgment in him who has given to our fiction-literature a racy vigour and a freshness which only genius can give. The greatest imaginative writer, unquestionably, since Shakespeare, is the author of "Chuzzlewit." With him we encounter no repetitions ; all is varied, novel, and interesting as nature herself ; and this great master of humour moves us to tears or laughter without the semblance of an effort on his part ; and as for those "inexpensive guests" that sit beside our fireplaces at lone hours, or stroll with us in our solitary rambles, we owe more of them to Charles Dickens than to any other writer of the century.

## BE ALWAYS READY WITH THE PISTOL.

“BE always ready with the pistol,” were amongst the last, if not the very last, words of counsel spoken by Henry Grattan to his son ; and if they be read aright they are words of deep knowledge and wisdom, and not the expressions of malevolence or of passion.

No man of his age—very few men of any age—was ever more exempted by the happy accidents of his nature from reliance on mere force than Henry Grattan. He combined within his character almost every attribute that gives a man power over his fellows. With the vigour and energy of a lion, he had an almost womanly gentleness. There was a charm in his manner, and a persuasiveness in his address, that the most prejudiced of his political enemies were the first to acknowledge. It was the temperament of an ancient Roman in all that regarded dignity, unswerving purpose, and high devotion to country, blended with a far nobler and purer patriotism than ever Roman knew ; and yet this man, armed with these great gifts, endowed with a superiority so unquestionable, had to own that there were not only occasions in life in which all individual supremacy must be merged that a man

may measure himself with another vastly his inferior in intellect, but that it is a positive duty not to decline, but actually to welcome, the occasion that may prove how ready the ablest man is to accept the arbitrament of the most vulgar-minded.

When Dr. Johnson stamped in a discussion because his adversary had done so, saying, "Sir, I will not concede to you the advantage of even a stamp!" he completely expressed this principle, and showed how essential it is that high intellect should not show itself deficient in whatever constitutes the strength of an inferior order of men.

In Grattan's day a duel was a common occurrence; almost every man in public life had fought more than once. Indeed, it was deemed a very doubtful sincerity that hesitated to stake life on the assertion of any line of action; and he who declined a provocation was as irretrievably ruined as if he had been convicted of forgery. In fact, it was almost in this light it was regarded. Courage being deemed so essentially part of a gentleman's nature, the discovery that it was wanting implied that degree of falsehood and deception that amounted to dishonour.

Rude as this chivalry was, it reacted most favourably on manners; the courtesy of debate was never violated by any of those coarse contradictions and unseemly denials which lower parliamentary habits. Men knew well that the questions which touched personal honour were to be settled in another place, and that he who transgressed the limits of a certain reserve did so with the full consciousness of all that might come of it.

It was rare, too, to find that anything like bitterness survived the "meeting." The quarrel once de-

cided, men returned to the daily business of life without a particle of animosity towards each other. They had settled their difference, and there was an end of it. When Mr. Corry was lying ill of his wound after his duel with Grattan, a friend came to sit with him one day, and after talking some time in the darkened room, let fall some remark reflecting on the conduct of the other's late antagonist,—“Hist !” cried Corry, “there's a little fellow asleep at the foot of the bed would send a ball through you if he heard that,”—the little fellow being Henry Grattan himself, who had never quitted the bedside of the wounded man, and who had just dropped off asleep from over-fatigue and watching.

Now, to compass generosity like this was surely worth something ; and I am by no means so certain that an equal degree of kind feeling would follow on one of our present-day altercations, when right honourable and honourable gentlemen are led to the interchange of courtesies more parliamentary than polite ; nay, I am perfectly convinced that the good fellowship of that time, confessedly greater than now, was mainly owing to the widely-spread respect for personal courage which pervaded public life.

I think I hear some one say, “This bloodthirsty Irishman wants to throw us all back into the barbarism that prevailed in the days before the Union ;” but I want nothing of the kind. I think that, at the period referred to, the point of honour was too pedantically upheld ; I think men resigned life on grounds totally unequal to such an appeal ; I think there was an undue touchiness, an over-tensity, in the intercourse of the time, that was neither wholesome nor beneficial ; but I will by no means concede that all the advantage is on

our side, because we have decreed that a duel is a disgrace, and that the man who fights one is disqualified for everything.

Of the consequences that have followed on the severe penalties against duelling in the service, I own frankly I cannot venture to speak, and for this reason, I cannot trust my temper to speak calmly. The gross insults, the cruel wrongs, the insufferable outrages passed on men who, to resent them, must have accepted their own irretrievable ruin, are themes I dare not permit myself to discuss. Neither will I suffer myself to say one word in disparagement of a system which honourable men are daily submitting to, with what heartburning and indignation Heaven alone could tell us! but, writing as I do in these sketches fully as much with reference to a public opinion outside Great Britain as within her limits, I desire to say that this legislation of ours about duelling, and the whole tone of our public opinion on the subject, has severely damaged us in Continental estimation. In the first place, no foreigner can possibly understand an Englishman's unwillingness to "go out," except on grounds that would impeach personal courage, because no foreigner knows enough of our public feeling to comprehend the fatal injury inflicted on a man's career in England by the repute of his having fought a duel. There is not a section in all the complex machinery of our society against which the delinquent does not hurl his defiance. As an eminent Irish judge, more remarkable for the bathos than the accuracy of his eloquence, once said, "The practice is inhuman, it is uncivilized, it is unchristian; nay, gentlemen of the jury, I will go further—it is illegal!"



And what man has the courage to face, not merely the chance of being shot, but the certainty of being stigmatized? I desire to declare here that I am not speaking vaguely or from hearsay. So far as a long residence amongst foreigners in nearly all parts of Europe enables a man to pronounce, I claim the right to declare that I know something about them; and I know of nothing that seems, through every separate people of the Continent, so universal as the belief that Englishmen do not like to "go out."

If a Frenchman or an Italian accept a challenge to a duel, it is a sort of brevet of bravery; wounded or unwounded, he comes home from the field a hero. The newspapers record the achievement as something glorious, and his friends call to see him as a species of Paladin. If he can but drive out with his arm in a sling, his fortune is made; and his recognition in a café, his smile of bland and triumphant heroism, is a thing to be accepted with gratitude. Contrast this with the Englishman, hiding not alone from the law, but from public opinion; not merely dreading the Attorney-General, but far more fearing his aunt in Cheltenham, whose heir he was to have been, but who, being "a Christian woman," will certainly have nothing to do with one who sought the blood of a fellow-creature—albeit a fellow-creature who had inflicted the deepest wound on his honour.

Think of *him*, I say, neither backed by the press, nor sustained by his friends, but nursing his fractured femur in solitude, with the consciousness that he has ruined his fortune and done for his character—that all the moments he can spare from his poultices must be passed in apologies to his friends, and reiterated as-

surances that he only accepted the issue of arms after an amount of provocation that almost brought on an apoplexy! And, last of all, imagine all the ridicule that awaits him—the pasquinades in the *Saturday*, and the caricatures in *Punch*; and while the noble Count, his antagonist, struts the “Bois” as a Bayard, *he* must skulk about like a felon that has escaped by a flaw in the indictment; a creature of whom the world must be cautious, as of a dog that was once mad, and that no one will guarantee against a return of hydrophobia!

They say no man would ever wish to be rescued from drowning if he only knew the tortures that awaited him from what is called the Humane Society. Indeed, the very description of them makes the guillotine or the garotte seem in comparison like a mild anodyne; but is not this exactly the position of the unfortunate man in question? Be ready with the pistol indeed! Be ready to accept loss of station, loss of respect, disinheritance, estrangement of friends, coldness of every one—not because you were quarrelsome or contentious—not because, being steady of hand and unerring of eye, you could venture to assume a tone that was likely to be resented—but simply because, with such French as they taught you at Rugby, you would not permit the Count Hippolyte de Coupé-gorge to revile your nation and defame your countrywomen in an open café, but threatened to throw him and his shako into the street.

Turn for a moment from the individual to the nation, and see if this damaging conviction has not a great deal to do with the estimate of our country now formed by all foreigners. We have not, it is true, any

enemy so grossly unjust as to deny courage to our nation ; but there is a current belief fast settling into a conviction that we are not “ ready with the pistol ”—that we require more provocation, and endure more outrage, than any one else ; and that it is always safe to assume that we will never fight if we can possibly help it.

The sarcasm of the First Napoleon, when he called us a nation of shopkeepers, had a far deeper and broader significance than a reference to our trading propensities. It went to imply, that in cultivating the spirit of gain, we had sacrificed the sentiment of glory ; and that the lower ambition of money-getting had usurped the place that should be occupied by a high and noble chivalry. It was a very good thing to teach Frenchmen this ; no better lesson could have been inculcated than a contempt for a people who had always beaten them. Still, as a mere measure of convenience, it is rather hard on us that we must be reduced to maintain our character for courage by far more daring feats, by bolder deeds and more enduring efforts, than are called for from any other people. The man who is ready with the pistol goes out on the first legitimate provocation, and, whether he shoots his man or is shot, the affair ends ; but he who declines and hesitates generally ends by such a disparagement of his courage, that he must fight some half-dozen times to set himself right with the world.

Why is France at the head of Europe ? Simply because she is ready with the pistol. War may be all that you like to say of it. The Quakers have done the vituperation so perfectly that I need not repeat it ; but there have always been wars, and there will always be

wars in the world ; and a drab-coated broad-brimmed thee-and-thou planet would be as dreary and tasteless as a ball in a counting-house. So long as England was ready with the pistol, there was not a nation in Europe dared to insult her. The men who guided our destinies through all the great wars of the First Empire were certainly not heaven-born statesmen in point of ability to devise, or eloquence to support, their measures—they were possibly very inferior to those who now sit on the Treasury benches. In the Liverpool Cabinet were no such really professional statesmen as we see in the present Ministry ; and yet compare the England of that day—one-eighth less in population, scarcely much more than half as rich, as at present—compare that England with this, and will all the boastful leaders of the *Times* reconcile you to the difference ? We were ready with the pistol in 1808 ; we were ready with it, also, after the rupture of the peace of Amiens ; and ready enough in 1815, too, when we played for the heaviest stake we had ever ventured.

For myself, I'd rather have seen Napier's fleet come back from the Baltic, shot-struck and disabled, with damaged rigging and smashed bulwarks, to tell that they had found the Russians tough customers—able to give as good as they took—than see them sail into the Downs without a spar injured or a block missing, and hear that the channels were intricate and the forts ugly, and that, all things considered, it was just as well to have nothing to do with them. Nelson found his way through more tortuous windings, in that self-same sea, to find at the end very different batteries from those of Sweaborg or Bommersund ; but he was one of those who were “ready with the pistol.”

I do not believe that the Nation at large is anything but what it always was. I am convinced that to-morrow we could count upon every great quality of noble heroism and daring that have given us our name in history.

But we want a little of that indiscipline of our fathers—that resistance to dictation, let it come from press or public—that haughty spirit which did not stop to count the cost when an insult was to be wiped out, and which, if it occasionally led us into embarrassments, ended by making our nation the freest and the foremost of Europe. Say what we may, we are not a military people, and the best proof of it is this—that we never can fight unless we are angry. I half wish that we were a little angry now, if only that one result should follow, and that we could show the world that the time is not gone by when we could be “ready with the pistol.”

But one word more. I am not indifferent to—I am deeply grateful for—the improved tone of our civilization, by which we have suppressed the fire-eater and put down the bully. I know of nothing so creditable to our manners, as that tacit understanding amongst all gentlemen, that the ruffian is not to be tolerated who, on the strength of his skill with a pistol, presumes to lord it over society. I think that by this step alone we have established an indisputable right to declare that we have made some progress in civilization.

I think, too, it is an immense gain to good breeding, and consequently to the enjoyment of all social intercourse, that, instead of, as formerly, merging all question of right and wrong in a hostile meeting, men are obliged nowadays to stand forth before the world, not

alone to vindicate their characters for honour and honesty, but for good temper and forbearance.

We have got thus far in England, and I would only say, let us not imperil this immense boon by presuming too far on its benefits ; and, above all, let us not forget that this great change in manners has made but little progress beyond the limits of our own country, and is still as essentially English as our Habeas Corpus, our bitter beer, or our beef. Foreigners, let it be remembered, will neither understand nor give us credit for it. If there is anything in our ways and habits totally above their comprehension, it is our system—whether in political or social life—of dispensing with checks. That public opinion can keep the peace in the street and in the *salon* is a hopeless riddle to them. And now I have done, I trust not to be misunderstood, and that they who have had the patience to follow me, will see when and why I deem a “man should be ready with the pistol.”

## THE MAN VERSUS HIS WORK.

THERE is a question I wish some one would resolve for me, for though I have an opinion upon it myself, I am by no means sure it is a correct one; and indeed the matter has so many aspects, it is not easy to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion.

The question is this: Are men generally greater or less than their works? That is to say, is the speech, or the lecture, or the poem, or the picture, better than or inferior to the man who made it? It is a somewhat large field for speculation, and probably would demand from us a greater insight into the natures and characters of distinguished men than is easily attainable. It is, moreover, one of those questions on which any great sweeping judgment would in all likelihood be incorrect.

There have been men of such versatile genius—so many-sided, as the Germans say—that it would be difficult to say they were not greater than their works; not alone because their great intellects could adapt themselves to labours so various and dissimilar, but because it would not be easy to pronounce in what especial pursuit the individual had found his truest field and his most congenial work. Michael Angelo was one of these.

My own opinion is this, the man is always, or almost always, inferior to the thing he produces; and in this instance, as in countless others, the part is better than the whole. I am, of course, here speaking solely of representative men—the great signs of the human equation. As for Jones and Brown & Co., I reserve them for another occasion.

The varying ratio of the difference between the man and his work will be measured by the character and peculiarity of the work itself.

Thus a man's greatest battle, his grandest speech in the House, his epic, or his essay, may possibly be only in a slight degree above the normal stature of the man himself; whereas, if he be a painter, his great picture is sure to overtop him considerably; and if a musician, his grand opera will reduce him to the mere proportions of a dwarf; and this, remember, not because music is a higher development of the intellectual faculty than war, statecraft, or poetry; but because of all created bipeds there is nothing so mentally small as a composer!

Mendelssohn alone of all our present-day men had genius: as for the others, there is not one of them whose worst ballad is not better than he who wrote it. They are the shallowest thinkers, the worst informed on matters of general interest, and the poorest conversationalists the world produces. They are as circumscribed as the actor, and they have not that humouristic tendency which gives to the actor all the emphasis of his character.

Next in order to musicians come hairdressers—great, indeed, as artists, poor as humanities. It would not be fair, perhaps, to expect a man to rise to the level



of the wig ; for what assumption of virtue or magnanimity could vie in counterfeit with that wave-like fall over the ears, that curl of more than child-like innocence on the forehead ? I can imagine Mr. Trucfit a charming companion, brilliant, suggestive, and versatile ; but it would be hard to persuade me that he was greater than “ her ladyship’s front ; ” or that, like his prototype, the red man, he was not grander in his “ scalps ” than in himself.

To come back, however, from special instances to my original proposition ; for if I walk farther in this track, I might grow personal. I opine, then, the work will be found almost universally greater than the man.

In other words, that the individual in any great creation has, through the excitement of his labour, so worked upon his faculties that they have accomplished results far beyond their normal exercise, and in this way transcended the man himself. Hence was it Petrarch shed tears as he read over his sonnets—tears, certainly, not shed for Laura ; and Cervantes laughed till he cried over the drolleries of Sancho Panza. And if Shakespeare withstood Falstaff, he was something more or less than human. I have heard, and I like to believe it, that Dugald Dalgetty was intensely relished by Scott years after he had written him.

Over and over again in the Lives of Painters do we find them in amazement at some of their own earlier efforts ; and Fuseli cried out on seeing one of his own without recognizing it, “ What a genius that fellow had ! ”

These are the traits, too, which Brown and Co. fix on to establish their pet accusation of vanity against

clever men ; and indeed I would wish at this moment to protest against being classed with these critics, since it is not by disparaging the man that I seek to establish my position, but by elevating the work. Now what is the true state of the case ? It is no use beating about the bush, taking a bygone example, or indicating a live one by asterisks. Let me instance myself ; I can afford to say it without any risk of being called vain. I have seen a great deal of life, not alone in the great world and the little world, but in that intermediate world which is bigger than them both. I am variously accomplished, and remarkably gifted. Don't be disgusted, sagacious reader ; I must say these things—they are part of my brief ; and if I do not put them forward, you certainly will not do so for me ; but if I am anything “great,” it is as a conversationalist. Competent judges from all parts of the world have declared that, though I may have an equal somewhere in Japan, perhaps, or Bokhara, I have no superior.

Not a monologist like Macaulay, nor an overbearing opinionist like Croker, nor a flippant epigrammatist like Thiers, my skill was pre-eminently employed in eliciting whatever latent stores of agreeability I could detect around me. Not merely a talker myself, I made talkers of others. No rock so dull that I could not elicit a spark from it ; no table-land so barren that I could not find a wild-flower in its desolation. Well, it so chanced that t'other day one of those creatures who presume on the fact of being an old schoolfellow to maintain an acquaintanceship, dormant for half a lifetime—as if there could be any bond of friendship cemented by having been flogged by the same cane—came through the neighbourhood where I have pitched

my tent for the summer, and installed himself as my guest for a day. He was a loutish, heavy-headed dog as a boy, and years had not made any better of him. He was as wearisome at forty as I remember him at fourteen, with this addition, that he had gathered as he went on in life a quantity of commonplace observation which he fancied to be wisdom, and a stock of the very dreariest stories that he thought wit. I had to endure this wretched incubus for twelve mortal hours, and to endeavour to what is called entertain him. I did my utmost ; I took him through politics, and gave him a canter from Circassia to Schleswig-Holstein, with diversions into Poland and North America. I tried him with Colenso and the Dean of Westminster, dashed with Dr. Darwin and spiced with Du Chaillu. I went into early Christian art, railroad shares, the grape disease, Garibaldi, the Irish famine, and the state of the Funds. I gave him a haunch of Alpine mutton Wales could not rival, and a bottle of such "chambertin" as the First Napoleon drank after a victory. I prolonged the evening in an arbour over the lake, with a view at our feet Claude never approached in his best moments, with the perfection of Mocha and an unparalleled cigar ; and after a long pause, in which, by the aid of maraschino, I was endeavouring to recruit exhausted nature, the creature said, "By the way, I gave Scroggins of the Three hundred and fifth a letter to you ; you were at Paris at the time."

"Perhaps so ; I do not remember. I have forgotten him."

"Well, he has not forgotten *you*."

At this remark I rallied. I brightened up—I felt as one, after days of lying becalmed, as the first air of

wind raises the drooping ensign at the peak, and wafts it lazily to the breeze. I thought, at all events, Scroggins was better than his friend. I at least had made some impression on *him*.

“Scroggins,” continued he, “is a clever fellow; he was on Sir Hugh Badstock’s staff in India twelve years ago, at Rangoon, and knows a deal of life.”

I gave a ready assent to this under the guarantee already received, that Scroggins had preserved a full memory of *me*.

“When he was going abroad,” continued he, “he came down to my place in Surrey. ‘Don’t you know O’Dowd?’ said he. ‘Intimately; we were in the same class at school.’ ‘Give me a letter to him,’ said he, ‘for I shall stop some time in Paris, and I hear so much of him, I’d like to see him.’”

At this I smiled blandly once more, and nodded that he should go on; but instead of doing so, he only filled his glass, and tasted it, and then sat silent.

“Well,” said I—“well?”

“I suppose,” said he, after another pause, “that you may have been ill, or out of sorts—probably hard up. I hear you often are hard up.”

“And why do you infer any of these?” asked I, a little uneasily.

“Well, I thought so, because Scroggins said when he came back that he was never so disappointed in all his life; you were not a bit what he expected; you never said a funny thing the whole time he was there—told no good story, and did not even once make him laugh. ‘In fact,’ said he, ‘Watkins of ours is worth a score of that fellow, and sings nigger-melodies and

dances the "Perfect Cure" till you'd split your sides looking at him."

"Did you ever hear what the footman said to Oliver Goldsmith in the kitchen?"

"No."

"You're a wit, they say; let us see if you can swallow a poker!"

"And what did Goldsmith say?" asked my ancient friend and schoolfellow.

"History recordeth not; but I believe I could tell you what he felt."

As he sipped his wine in silence, I remembered an anecdote of a fellow-sufferer, and my memory helped me to some consolation. It was during one of Charles Kean's visits to the United States. He was entertained at dinner by one of the great New York merchants. Opposite to him at the table there sat a gentleman, who continued to observe him with marked attention, and at last called on the host to present him to Mr. Kean. The introduction was duly made, and ratified by drinking wine together, when the stranger, with much impressiveness of manner, said, "I saw you in Richard last night."

Kean, feeling, not unnaturally, that a compliment was approaching, smiled blandly and bowed.

"Yes, sir," continued the other, in a slow, almost judicial tone; "I have seen your father in Richard; and I saw the last Mr. Cooke"—another pause, in which Charles Kean's triumph was gradually mounting higher and higher. "Yes, sir! Cooke, sir, was better than your father; and your father, sir, a long way better than *you*!"

Now, of course, these things, or something like

them, happen every day. If we have not a slave in our chariot, we have a schoolfellow ; and I have mentioned this fact to show that I am well aware that though this order of men is a large class, I by no means accept the honour of being brigaded amongst them ; and, as I have already declared, I do not desire to bring down the man, but to elevate the thing he has created.

The Cockney who knocks with his knuckles at the great bell of Moscow and pronounces its tone to be poor, is a fair representative of the creatures who impose themselves on men of distinction out of a mere vulgar curiosity, and then go away, disparaging that greatness of which their nature could give them no measure. Besides this, the small fry who hunt celebrities want something applicable to themselves and their own small ways and small habits. They want him to give something to record ; to shoot a bird that they may carry home.

It is thus that the world gets crammed with twaddling stories about this or that great General or Minister being singularly heavy in society, taking little part in the conversation, and never by an observation or a remark rising above the veriest commonplace. It is wonderful how even clever men, when little conversant with society, will fall into this mistake. Jeffrey, with all his acuteness, is an instance. He mentions his having met Talleyrand at dinner, and being seated next him. The occasion was a proud one, and he hoped to carry away from it some memories that would not die ; but the only remark the great Minister made him was, "*Apropos de votre célèbre potage de cock-a-leekie, Mon. Jeffrey, faut-il le manger*"

avec des prunes ou sans prunes?" Now, had the clever Scotsman been as subtle as a man of society as he was as a lawyer, the question, instead of deterring him by its frivolity, would have opened one of the pleasantest themes that can be discussed at table. Did he want the Treaty of Amiens, the death of the Duc d'Enghien, or the restoration of the Bourbons? You will see, sagacious reader, that I do not seek recruits to my opinion about the superiority of the work to the man amongst those who go about recording their bitter disappointments with clever people.

The greatest men—that is, the men who deal with the greatest questions—are seldom good talkers. The indiscretion so essential to good talk would be fatal to them. Louis Philippe, indeed, would tell you everything—the last interview he had with Guizot, and the contents of the despatch he had sent off to Soult; but then he had this greatest security—nobody believed a word of it. To my theme, however. The man will never be equal to his best work, for this reason, that he will never be able to present such a force of concentration in himself, as in that to which, for a given time at least, he gave all his energy and all his will. What a poor creature have I seen a great chess-player—by what a "Cretin" have I been electrified at the piano! What a dotard have I overlooked at the whist-table, displaying traits of veritable genius in the game!

The small folk in art, letters, politics, or the drama may be, I grant, greater than their works. It is not according them any overwhelming praise, and they are welcome to it. There is, indeed, a sort of agreeability that seems to depend on a man's failure in his especial career; and we all of us can call to mind pleasant

painters who daubed abominably, and actors who could be delightful in society, though they were always "damned" on the stage. As for the briefless barrister, he has ever been a charming companion; and I am credibly informed that there are great authorities on the bench who look regretfully back to the time when they went circuit only for change of air. To say that some one portion of a man's life is greater than the whole of it, is not a very startling proposition. Take, for instance, Sydney Smith's defence of Acre; take Wolfe's night-attack on Quebec; Desaix's charge at Marengo; or take such an action as we saw t'other day, when that American—he is now a Confederate captain—went through the midst of the fight on the Peiho, to the ship of Admiral Hope, rowed in an open boat through shot and shell and crashing musketry, to offer any succour in his power to the wounded. Tuffnel, I think—I hope I am right—was his name. I say it will be a rare chance if his whole life be up to the level of that noble achievement.

It will be the same in matters of intellectual effort. There will be moments, hours, even days, when some great minds—who knows how nourished, how stimulated, how prompted?—will accomplish what no effort of mere will could ever have effected; and at such times as these the work will be greater than the man. It would seem that there is something uncontrollable at certain periods in human intellect—something that, revolting against all discipline and all restraint, confers a power on the mind's operations which is never the accompaniment of its normal labours; and in this way it resembles the strength of the man in insanity, which, without any real accession of increased force, appears



to be doubled. These are the seasons in which men work out those conceptions, which, after the lapse of years, they come to look on with wonder and astonishment.

“ Ah ! I could draw in those days,” said Vandyck, when, in his advanced manhood he saw his first sketch of the picture of “ St. Martin parting his cloak.” The Single-speech Hamiltons are a class. There are a large number of men of one book, one picture, one poem. There are even men of one joke ; and I’ll be bound, in such a case, that the joke was as good, if not better, than the man who made it.

Now, if men be inferior to their works, I think the reverse is the case with women. They are invariably better than anything they paint, or write, or model, or compose ; and one reason is, they have less power of concentration than men—less of that faculty that enables the individual, while directing all his energies to one effort, to invest that effort with something totally extraneous to, and occasionally superior to, the individual who effected it.

Women, too, I suspect, work with far less strain on their faculties than men ; and part of that natural easy tone, so fascinating in their writing, is a result of this. Still, it has the effect of all steaming at half power, the pace is comparatively slow.

If I wanted an instance of the woman superior to anything she had produced, I would quote my distinguished countrywoman, Miss Edgeworth. Now, some of her shorter tales are admirable ; in the painting of certain traits of the Irish character, I do not know her equal. She understood that strange nature with all its varying shades, and its characteristics, at times so

opposite and antagonistic, with a nicety of appreciation that none have ever surpassed ; and yet how immeasurably above all she wrote was she herself—how superior her conversation to the best dialogue of her books—and how infinitely more gentle, more tender, more womanly, in fact, was she than the sweetest heroine she ever drew !

I forbear to quote some others whose names occur to me at this moment, because I have already erred in letting the question lapse into the individual.

## A "NOW" AND A "THEN."

I WILL not say how many years it is since I first saw Florence. Of course, I was only a boy, a mere child, at the time; but certainly there was not, throughout Europe, a city to compare with it in social excellence and enjoyment.

Though only a grand-ducal Court, many of the ministers accredited to it took rank as ambassadors. Our own was Lord Burghersh, than whom none sustained the honour of his country with more dignity, or dispensed the hospitalities of a high station with more elegance and urbanity. Many noble English families were amongst the residents; and Prince Demidoff—the Old Prince, as he was distinctively called—kept almost open house at San Donato, and maintained, besides, an admirable corps of French actors, who gave, twice a week, representations at his private theatre, to which, without invitation, all persons presented to the Prince were free; and, if they pleased to come in evening dress, were also eligible to partake of the splendid supper which followed the close of the entertainment. At Lord Burghersh's there was an amateur opera given every week, admirably sustained, the chief

... by the two Princes Poniatowsky and

the prima donna being the present Princess Poniatowsky. The chief direction, it is needless to say, was intrusted to the noble host, a musician of the highest attainments. Besides these, Lord Mulgrave gave his English theatricals, probably never surpassed in the ability of those who figured in them, nor in the subsequent distinction that awaited them in life. Charles Mathews, I believe, made his first appearance on these boards, and, if I mistake not, once played in a piece where three of his fellow-actors lived to be Secretaries of State in England.

Lord Burghersh kept a pack of harriers, and hunted thrice a week. There was a Jockey Club and a good racing subscription; and what with riding-parties, whist, dancing, *ecarté*, and flirting, it was wonderful how rapidly time flew over, and how grave our faces grew when the calls of Parliament and the demands of the London season came to throw their shadows over the glorious spring-time on the Arno. I am certain it is not the mere spirit of the *laudator temporis acti* that prompts me to speak of these things in such eulogy. I can acknowledge how in many ways the world of the present day has gained on the world of my boyhood. One travels better and faster; one dines better at small cost; the newspapers are more interesting, more varied, better written, and in a tone more congenial to the best spirit of society. Intercourse, generally, is safer than it used to be; we have some Bores, but few Bullies; but—I say it advisedly—society has not now, as it had then, that marvellous flavour of high-hearted pleasure, that racy enjoyment of people who were not too languid to be brilliant, nor too lackadaisical to be witty. The salt of the cleverest men and the most engaging women

seasoned all intercourse ; and the effort was to keep up to the pace of the pleasantest, and not, as we see it now, to bring all down to the uniform dulness of those Lord Dundrearies, who, except in their clever satirist, are the heaviest social infliction ever an age was cursed with.

The Haw-haw tone of those creatures, whose whiskers are so familiar to us in *Punch*, did not exist in those days. It was the fashion for men to be manly and for women to be feminine. I will not say that, morally speaking, there was much to the advantage of the period. It was not better, though assuredly not worse, than our present day ; and in all that regards externals—in fitting deference to ladies, in the distinctive reverence due to those of station, as separated from others of neither station nor character—the past has much to boast over the present.

It was a fatal mistake for women to suffer the present free-and-easy tone in their *salons*. In losing the especial prestige that belonged to them as ladies, they surrendered all that divided them from a class who, in mere looks and toilette, can always be their rivals : and I will say it, that he who had attempted the lounging impertinence, the self-sufficient indifference to others, and the blank vacuity in all that regards agreeability, in the times I speak of, would have as certainly found himself excluded from society as the knave or the blackleg.

A certain amount of bad morals has always passed muster in the world ; but the ingredient never did real mischief till it was associated with bad manners. It was a poison, but it was a poison in a well-stoppered phial. Now the custom is not only to uncork the

bottle, but, like the Swedish Prince with his scent *flacon*, to sprinkle the company !

It is certainly a great day—a grand era—for the stupid people ! none so dull that he cannot be insolent, none so stolid but he can smoke. We have taken the level of the lowest capacities as our social standard, and voted as vulgar all capacities above the dreary insufficiency of our dullest ! Make the most of it, ye ensigns and small civil servants. It can't last for ever—no more than the Whig Government, or the shoddy aristocracy in America.

Now, they have it certainly all their own way ; and I'd back Gumsley, of the 109th, with his green complexion and his cat's moustaches, for a social success against Brinsley Sheridan, if you could bring him back, with all the wit of "The Rivals," and all the fun of "The Critic." I suspect in our taste for tobacco we have grown to be Turkified, and place our El Dorado in a state of perfect "do-nothingness."

To tell the really pleasant people of the world to take their tone from such as these, is like ordering a regiment to take their time from a corps of cripples, and to march with a shuffle to suit the step of the lame. But the thing is done, and we see it, and there is no help for it ; and now, to come back to this poor city, of which I am tempted to say, as the Emperor did on his return from Elba, "*Qu'avez-vous fait de cette (Florence) que je vous ai laissée si belle ?*"

The passion for making large States may conduce to that pleasant Utopia called the Balance of Power, though I have grave doubts of it ; but assuredly it does not conduce to the happiness of mankind.

If so humble an object as happiness could occupy

the lofty intelligences of statesmen, it might be worth while to consider for a moment whether small States had not, from the very fact of their unambitious position and narrow limits, immense advantages in this respect. Saxe-Weimar and Tuscany, as I knew them some thirty years ago, are the witnesses I should like to put in the box.

Weimar was of course very inferior in all claims to wealth, luxury, or refinement. It was a small village-like capital, with a miniature palace, a miniature theatre, a quaint old park, and a quaint old Platz.

The Court dined at four o'clock, and, rising at six, went out to stroll, grand duke and duchess and all, in the park. Dear me! what a strange medley of simplicity and formality, rural enjoyment and etiquette, cowslips and curtsies, many selected compliments and tobacco smoke! but very soothing and tranquillizing withal. If you sat down to whist with the Hoch-Wohl-Geboren, Herr Geheimerath, or the Staats Secretär, you could scarcely be ruined at groschen points, any more than you would be driven to suicide by an unhappy passion for his yellow-haired daughter. Then life had nothing startling, nothing sensational. There was a nice soft drowsy dulness that aided digestion, and never conduced to dreams.

In the evening the "society" assembled in a sombre old house, with narrow windows in front and a small somewhat gloomy-looking garden behind, where lived a large old white-haired man with his niece. Though a man of grand presence and imposing mien, with much dignity in his address, he was very fond of mixing with the young people of the company, and especially with a number of young Englishmen who at

that period resided at Weimar for the advantages of military education. At the time I tell of, there was amongst them one who is now a duke, with one of the greatest historic names in Europe. With these generally this old gentleman frequently conversed, or, more frequently still, discoursed, telling of his travels in Italy, the objects which had held the chief place in his memory, the galleries he had seen, the society he had frequented, the distinguished men whose acquaintance he had made; and all these with occasional touches of picturesque description, traits of humour, and now and then a deep feeling which held his little auditory in rapt astonishment that he could hold them there entranced, while they could not, when he had done, recall any of the magic by which he worked his spell. I say this because I myself remember to have tried to repeat a story he told, and once, more hazardous still, to convey some impression of how he talked; and with what lamentable failure let my present confession atone for. The task would have tried a better man, for him whom I essayed to represent was Goethe.

It was only a few years before that very time I speak of, that the choice society of Florence was wont to assemble each evening at a large palace on the Arno. It is the third as you pass down from the Ponte St. Trinitá. There a royal personage, <sup>she</sup> albeit she had deflected from her bright sphere, <sup>received</sup> ~~received~~, and all that was great and noble and brilliant, or, better still, beautiful, came to talk or to listen, be flattered or be worshipped, or, what I am half given to believe is nearly as good, to flatter and worship—not doing the thing grudgingly, or in any fashion of constraint, as in our prudish England we should do it. but “going in”



with a will, and giving to those liquid vowels of the soft south all the ring and resonance of a deep-felt sentiment. It was a good type, that same society, of the mingled passion and weakness, the apathy, the earnestness, the vigorous energy, and the voluptuous indolence of Italian life. One talker, a tall, burly, stern-looking man with red-brown hair and wide-set eyes, was pre-eminent above all for that sort of brilliant discursive talk which has its charm at times for the veriest trifler and the deepest thinker. He was witty, but with a scathing, withering blasting wit that burned where it fell; he disliked England, but with a sense of reverence for her great qualities. As to France, he hated and despised her. In her influence over his own country, Italy, he foresaw nothing but misfortune, and declared that to consummate Italian degeneracy no more was wanting than to infuse into the national character the scoffing incredulity and the degenerate levity of the Gaul. This man was Alfieri!

It was no mean era when Germany and Italy were so represented. And now—shall I go on to mark the contrast? No, I prefer holding the defendants over till next month, when the weather may possibly be somewhat cooler, and my sentence be more merciful than if pronounced with the mercury near 100°, and my brains at the temperature that makes paraffine explosive.

## SERVANTS.

WE have had lately in our newspapers a great deal of nonsense—some of it very good-natured nonsense—about servants, averring that their faults are rather the consequences of ill-judging and inconsiderate treatment by their masters, and that, as a class, they are amiable, honest, sober, affectionate, and grateful ; and that the social reformation required would be to treat them with greater deference to their wishes, accord them more liberty, freer time for recreation, and, in general, a higher regard and consideration.

Where the people who write in this fashion met with their phoenix of a butler, or that black swan their cook, I don't know ; but my own suspicion is, that the glowing eulogiums I have quoted were the experiences of those who only knew servants in their friends houses, and approved of them as they did of his claret or his pheasants, or any things that were his.

My experiences are certainly all the other way, and, next to sickness, I look upon servants as the greatest infliction of humanity ; and there is no quality I so much envy the rich man, as in the fact that his wealth removes him to such a distance from their contact, that he knows next to nothing of their tempers

or habits, and is never by any accident involved, as poorer men are doomed to be, in their private jealousies, hatreds, and utter uncharitableness.

In the first place, it is only fairly natural and reasonable that they should be sources of discomfort and annoyance, rather than of satisfaction and ease. Their whole life is a sort of lie. They are peasants thinly lackered with a very dubious sort of civilization—that is, they catch up a faint semblance of what they see in the drawing-room, to enact it below stairs to the accompaniment of their native coarseness and barbarism.

If we are to trust to what old people say, they were better formerly—that is, better before they had penny journals and illustrated absurdities. This is not impossible. There is a sort of feudalism in the principle of the family that works all the better when distinctions of class are well marked; and once the maids begin to read “Eleanor’s Victory,” and “Lost and Saved,” and discuss the characters with the “young ladies,” discipline is endangered, and very seriously too.

I like an ignorant valet, and a butler who has to spell out his newspaper. I sleep soundly when I know Jeames is not rummaging my letters, and picking up details for my biography out of my writing-desk. Give me a butler who keeps his cellar-book, as Robinson Crusoe kept his almanack, on a notched stick! It is a comfort to me to think that my Review or my Magazine is not thumbed by Mr. “Fag,” or that my missing Quarterly has not to be sought for in the housekeeper’s room. Every lawyer and every doctor knows what a serious influence it would have on his professional success if it got abroad that he

was greatly addicted to the bassoon, or very fond of shuttlecock, or much given to charades and small plays. People would say, How can Mr. So-and-so be possibly engaged in the serious work of his profession with such tastes as these? Are these the habits that indicate deep thought or grave reflection? And if this be true as to men whose education and training are all favourable to versatility, what are we to say to a class singularly limited in their range of knowledge, and almost one-idea'd on every subject, indulging in discursiveness? We want concentration, and how do we seek to provide it? By everything that distracts attention and disperses thought. Jeames has to do with lamps and decanters—he is a creature of spoons and finger-glasses and lap-dogs—and we want to make him a subscriber to the *Saturday Review* and a reader of Bulwer Lytton. Surely this is absurd. You would be afraid to trust your interests to a lawyer who had a passion for fossils, and passed much of his time in his laboratory; and yet you are quite ready to concede all the privileges of varied pursuits to a creature whose highest day-dream should never rise beyond a coal-scuttle, and who, instead of unrolling a mummy, should be folding a napkin.

Domestic service is a profession, and to follow it well, the fewer distractions a man has the better. If I see the butler with the *Times* in his hand, I am prepared to find the claret shaken; if I see Jeames with *Bell's Life*, I understand at once why my boots are lacking in lustre. Try a free press on board of a man-of-war, and see how much discipline you will get; and yet a household must be ruled pretty much like a ship. You want promptitude, activity,

exactness, and obedience; and how much of these are you to expect from a set of creatures puffed up with the self-importance of a mistaken status, their heads turned with all the projects an ill-judging philanthropy has devoted to them, and full of Penny Journalism and "Once a Week'-erie?"

Alphonse Karr tells us that from the moment he furnished a house he ceased to be an independent creature. "From that hour," said he, "my chairs and tables that I thought *I* owned, owned *me*. They were the masters of my whole destiny, and *my* duty it was to see that they met no ill-treatment, were not scratched, smashed, nor abused." So it is with servants. You want to have a butler, for instance. Have you ever stooped to give your nearest friend such a thorough account of your life and habits, have you ever made such a confession of your tastes and tempers, as to this Priest of the Sideboard? How many months you pass in the country, how long you reside in town? Where do you go for a watering-place, and when? What are your habits of hospitality? Do you give dinners, and what sort of dinners? What wine is your usual drink? You narrate your hour of rising and retiring to rest, and you fill up a full sketch of your private history; but how often, notwithstanding all the insidious flatteries you insert about the ways of the family, "White Choker" is obdurate! He is not used to gentlemen who drink sherry, or go to Harrogate, or dine early—he deplores the hard necessity of refusing you, but he sees that you would never hit it off together, and he retires, leaving you to go over the same details to another "gentleman" then waiting in the hall.

I am the most long-suffering and patient of men—

friends who know me intimately call me Job ; but I own that scenes like this—and I have gone through some scores of them—have whitened my whiskers and threatened me with apoplexy.

The truth is, what between our listless laziness and self-indulgence, we have surrendered our lives to a set of insolent rascals, who have contrived to exact the very highest rate of pay for the very smallest modicum of service.

Why can modern mechanical genius do nothing for us? Oh for a steam butler and a self-acting housemaid ! Oh for a cook that a man could wind up like an eight-day clock, and never think of till the end of the week !

Take my word for it, the fellow who makes your toast or fills out your madeira has more of your daily happiness in his keeping than it is at all pleasant to acknowledge ; and to elevate him to a position where this mastery becomes a tyranny is as repugnant to good sense as to good economy.

I am ready to subscribe for an asylum for all ill-treated and ruined masters to-morrow, but for a “ Flunkies’ Home ” I’ll give never a sixpence.

## REFORMATORIES.

I AM not, so far as I know myself, one who takes a gloomy view of human nature. After more experience of life than happens usually to most men of my age—which shall be set down at anything you like medieval—I am led to regard humanity on the whole as a better thing than I thought it on first acquaintance.

I have found the same to be the result of the experience of nearly every thorough “man of the world” I have ever questioned on the matter. Let me not be misunderstood. I am no warm believer in what is called progress. If the world be better than it used to be, it is in some such inappreciable quality that is of no value, just as astronomers tell us we are so many hundreds of thousands of miles nearer the sun than at some remote era—a matter that, so far as the consumption of coals is concerned, the most economical householder will scarcely rejoice over. We are better pretty much as we are healthier. There are a few old maladies that we have learned to treat more skilfully, and some two or three new ones have dropped down on us that are puzzling us sorely.

I think the most hopeful thing to say of us is, that

we do not grow worse with age ; and the more I think of it, I deem this no small praise.

But apart from all this question of progress, I think well of the world. I think there is a great deal of kindness, a great of generosity, and a great deal of tenderness in human nature—ay, and in quarters, too, where one would not look for it—grains of gold in rock that had not a single feature of quartz. Any one who has looked closely at life, will tell you how struck he has been by the daily spectacle of small sacrifices, small concessions, he has witnessed. The tender, uncomplaining, untiring, care of a sick child ; the devotion that did not alone become an office of love, but grew into the whole business of life ; the high-couraged submission of a poor suffering wife or mother, bearing bravely up under pain, to make one in a family where her empty chair would be a gloom and a sadness ; the weary man of toil throwing off his care at his door, that his tired brow should not cast a shadow on the bright circle round the hearth. If I have called these small sacrifices, it is not from disparagement. I only mean to distinguish them from the great heroic efforts which have the world for an audience, and of which I am not thinking just now, and which, be it remarked, as they cost more effort, are also from that very reason, supplied with more force from within the heart of him who makes them, than these little daily demands on time, temper, and endurance.

On the whole, I am satisfied that the good preponderates largely over the bad. Ay, and I even believe that people are very often better than they know themselves ; that is to say, capable of sacrifices and of



self-denials to an extent which, having never been called for, they would deem impossible.

Now, it was necessary I should declare this opinion of mine thus broadly before I assert what is my object at this writing—that, well as I think of humanity in the gross, I have the very smallest and shallowest faith in what are called “Reformatories,” and I implicitly believe that they are as flagrant failures as are to be found in this grand era of soap-bubbles.

First of all, crime of every sort—and I take the word crime, as I desire to speak of prisons and prisoners—crime, I say, stands, with respect to the moral man, in relation very closely resembling what disease presents to the physical man, an abnormal condition, proceeding from a complication of causes, partly structural, partly accidental, and largely from a due want of that care, abstention, and self-control required to restrain men from doing what impulse suggests, but right reason and judgment would repudiate.

Disease is not more varied in its aspect than crime, for crime takes its characteristics from all the circumstances which fashion and mould disease. The individuals vary in all the different shades that age, sex, habit, training, physical conformation, passions, and temptations can impress. The agile youth who has stolen your watch is not a bit like the muscular scoundrel that broke open your plate-chest, or the oily, smiling villain who forged your acceptance; and yet these three men, sentenced and imprisoned, would be subjected to exactly the same reformatory discipline. Now, what would we say of the doctor who treated a sprained ankle, a dropsy, and an apoplexy by the same remedies, ignoring all consideration of both patient

and disease, and simply regarding him as a sick man?

Prisoner or patient, there is the discipline you must undergo. Why, Morrison's pills or Mr. Somebody's ointment is nothing to this! Let us be fair to the quacks in physic. They almost all of them insist upon a long course of their peculiar panacea, and in the letters of testimony that they publish we constantly read, "I have now been taking your invaluable drops for upwards of thirty years;" whereas the reformatory people turn out their cases in three, six, or twelve months, and a housebreaker goes out a cleansed leper, strong from the dietary, and vigorous in the ethics of prison discipline.

Now, I'll not enter upon the far too wide field of the immense liabilities to deception, the prisoner being as constitutionally a hypocrite as a thief; but I will return to my illustration, and ask, What would be said of the physician who only intervened when cases were all but hopeless, who had little to suggest for prevention, but kept all his science for those *in extremis*?

There was once upon a time a very charitable lady in Ireland, Lady L—— C——, who established a refuge for her fallen sisters; and when one morning a fine fresh bright-eyed young girl, ignorant of the nature of the asylum, presented herself for admission, the patroness, deeply compassionating so young a victim, proceeded to ask the circumstances of her "fall," and, to her astonishment, discovered that she was no derelict from virtue at all, but perfectly pure and innocent. "Ah, then, we cannot receive you, my dear child," said her Ladyship; "you must go and qualify."

Here is the essence of the whole reformatory sys-

tem. The hard-worked poor man, wearied with labour and crazed with rheumatism, has no interest for you. You have no counsels, no encouragements, no wise precepts for him. He may fag his weary way through life without one word to cheer him; he may plod on to the grave unnoticed and unaided: but let him only steal a loaf, or knock over a rabbit, straightway is he dear to you. Then has he gone and "qualified," and at once all the stores of reforming tenderness are opened to him, and hopes and promises, which in the days of his integrity he had never heard of, now shower down upon his head, an ill-doer and a criminal.

Reformation almost invariably begins from within. It is the result of a reasoning process by which the individual arrives at the conclusion that he will be healthier, or richer, or more long-lived, or something or other, than he would wish to be, if he were to abjure this and adopt that.

For the most part, men make these reformations in pure deference to public opinion. They argue somewhat thus:—There is an impression abroad that theft is immoral. Men have built up an arbitrary system of what they call property; and though I am persuaded it is a narrow-minded unbrotherly view to take of human nature, yet as I am in the minority, I succumb, and for the future I will work instead of rob. I don't mean to say I like it, but the odds are so terribly against me in the one case, that after mature deliberation I accept the other.

Now, when honesty is said to be the best policy, it is a mere trick to say that it is best in the sense of worldly advantage. It is best on grounds of morality—best in whatever regards man's highest and greatest

interests ; but that it is best with respect to mere success in life, I totally deny. He would be a shameless man who would venture to declare such a proposition in this age of railroad-jobbing and joint-stock swindle. It would be invidious to give examples near home ; but look at the men around the French Emperor. Look at M——, and W——, and P——, and a score more—a mere set of from-hand-to-mouth adventurers a few years ago, and now amongst the richest men in Europe ! Look at the ex-minister in Italy, with his railroad scheme jobbed at the price of a quarter of a million sterling. But why take examples ? Simply ask yourself, Is it amongst the rigidly scrupulous, the strictly fair-dealing section of your acquaintances, you would seek for the men who are likely to make great success in life ?

The fact is, the pursuit of money has all the characteristics of a grand *chasse*, and the men of consols and shares have an ardour fully as high, and a courageous daring not a whit inferior to that felt by the fox-hunter or the deer-stalker ; and neither have time enough to be scrupulous. What a man does every day not merely enlists his sympathies and engages his interests, but blunts his susceptibilities as to its effect on others. He looks upon it as a thing that must be ; and I have no doubt that your great Rothschilds regard “ Dividends ” as a part of the universal scheme fully as confidently as they trust the earth will go round the sun.

Now, as heavenly bodies have their aberrations, so will earthly ones ; and men enlisted in any pursuit which engrosses them deeply are more prone to become gamblers than they know of.

I remember here an anecdote a very dear old friend

once told me. He was rector of a parish in the north of Ireland, where, from the habits of the Scotch Church prevailing largely, it is not unusual to find some two or three men taking rank and place amongst the congregation, and assuming, with the Episcopalians, somewhat the character of elders in the other community.

One of these, a man of hitherto unblemished integrity, had been accused of some sharp practice in money-dealing, and the case was reported to the rector. My friend sent for the man, narrated the charge, and anxiously asked, Could it be possible that such an imputation could attach to him?—"for," said he, "I have refused to credit it, Mathew, nor shall I, till you yourself declare to me it is true."

"And it is, your reverence," said he, submissively, and much sorrow-stricken; "it is just true, and there's no denyin' it! But," added he, with an effort, "it's unco hard to be 'in Grace' in the flax season."

Now, I take it, most of us have our "flax seasons." But where have I left my reformatories all this time? Let me go back to them.

Let us take the case of the thief. Theft, like gambling, indisposes a man to any laborious effort to earn his livelihood. The fellow who can by a stroke of address provide himself with a week's or perhaps a month's subsistence, will certainly feel no vocation for hard work simply because it is an honest calling.

Now, when we tell such a man that honesty is the best policy, he says, "With all my heart; follow it if you like; but I like my own system better." If he comes, however, to see that he is usually found out, and that each new discovery heightens his punishment, and that at last the fight against the law is unequal, if

he be a fellow of any wit, he will address himself to another handicraft; but it is neither you nor your system that has reformed him. It is simply the man himself, who, having some experience of life, has learned that roguery doesn't pay. Nor is it easy for him to come to this conclusion, no more than it was easy for the justice, who sentenced him, to give up snuff, or the justice's clerk to abandon gin-and-water.

If the thief's experiences are, however, more rose-coloured—if he has dodged the law successfully for a number of years, and only been “nabbed” by an accident, and slightly sentenced—take my word for it, you'll not reform him, no more than you will persuade that bland old gentleman with the rubicund nose to give up port, or the thin man in spectacles beside him to forswear short whist. Make vice unprofitable—that is, make crime, so far as you can, certain of detection—and then you will reform criminals. As to your persuasive efforts, your orderly habits, your wise precepts, etc., I never trust them the day after their exercise has ceased. You cure for the time, but you can't prevent the relapse.

I remember hearing, once on a time, of a certain great meeting held in Dublin, to hear the report of a committee on the subject of the conversion of the Jews. The substance of the report was so far favourable, that several Jews had been brought to embrace Christianity; but here came the drawback; it was always found that when the efforts of the controversialist had ceased, and the convert was pronounced safe, he had invariably gone back again to his old belief.

This was disheartening, certainly; and while the

meeting was in the act of deploring such a calamity, a young naval officer, who happened to be present, observed that he had within his own experience one case, which certainly gave a more cheery aspect to the question, and with their permission he would be glad to relate it. It was, of course, very interesting to obtain testimony, and from a quarter so unlooked for, and he was politely requested to mount the platform and address the meeting.

After a brief apology for his deficiencies as an orator, he related how it happened that once he was in command of a small sloop of war at the mouth of an African river, whose banks were inhabited by a colony of Jews, a race of most strange and mysterious origin, but yet to be found there. Amongst these there was one, a very venerable-looking old fellow, who supplied the sloop with yams and sweet potatoes, and such other produce; "and with him," said the officer, "I had frequent discussions, some of them on religious topics. He interested me at last to that degree that I began to wish I could convert him, though really, from my ignorance of polemics, I did not know exactly how to set about it; and at the same time I was discouraged by hearing that, of the supposed converts made by missionaries on the coast, there was not one who had not relapsed.

"While I thus hesitated and pondered, I received sudden orders to sail. I went on shore to settle some matters of the ship's accounts, and seeing that Moses was on board, I offered him a passage in my gig, to have a few last words with him. We started a religious discussion at once; but I found my friend, long trained to argue with the missionaries, rather more than my

match. He knew far more than I did, and employed his knowledge more skilfully. In my embarrassment I grew angry. I was foiled so often that my men had hard work to keep from laughing, and this overcame me completely. So I just seized him by the collar and chucked him into the sea; and after keeping him down for a second or two, I said, 'Will you be a Christian now?'

"'No,' said he—'never.' Down he went again, and for a little longer, when I asked, 'Will you now?'

"'No,' said he, 'for nothing on earth.'

"I put him under again, ladies and gentlemen; and, I am obliged to own, I kept him almost a minute, so that when he did come up he was very red in the face, and nearly suffocated.

"'What do you say now? Will you be a Christian?'

"'Yes,' said he, with a gulp.

"'Then you shan't relapse, anyway,' said I; and so, ladies and gentlemen, I put him down again, and held him there quite long enough to prevent accidents; and that was the only Jew I ever heard of who didn't recant."

The lieutenant may have been unlucky; but are we more fortunate in our experiences of the "ticket-of-leavers" who are the prize-men of our jails? Are not the convictions we daily read of all, or nearly all, of men well known to the police—"old offenders"?

The almost certainty of detection is your true reformer. Show the thief that it "won't pay." Let the burglar learn that housebreaking, like landlordism, has its responsibilities, ay, and that they are sure to be



imposed ; and when you have done this, the profession will become unpopular.

Strengthen your police and scrutinize your magistrates, and, take my word, you may practise a wise economy in jail-reformers and prison-disciplinists ; and if, besides this, you make jails uncomfortable, there will be no more to do than “rest and be thankful.”

## SCIENTIFIC CONGRESSES.

WHEN John Girder declared that whatever "was perfectly uneatable might be given to the poor," he enunciated the grand maxim of Scientific Congresses; these wonderful meetings of world-famed men being very little else than grand gatherings for the disposal of rejected articles. What the originators of such societies intended, what they meant or hoped for when they instituted them, is clear and clean beyond me. I never yet met the man who owned he had gleaned anything from their lucubrations. I never saw the woman who did not come away more conceited and self-opinionated from having frequented them. First of all, they are not congresses at all, for the discussional element in them is at the very lowest. When I have read my paper on the "Prismatic formation observable in maiden ladies of advanced years," another opens with a "Remarkable phosphorescence in the eyes of sanguineous gentlemen, when they discuss the poor-rates;" but nobody disputes, nobody inquires into, nobody investigates these. A timid naturalist at the end of the room will perhaps hint that something or other in his own experience has not corroborated the learned gentleman's most interesting paper; but

the President comes down at once with his vote of thanks, and there's a great clapping of hands and scraping of feet, and they all rise and go off to tea, "dreary companions, every one."

The only bit of real cleverness I have ever detected in these "scientific" swells, is the choice of the place they meet in. I have not tested the fact by experiment, and therefore I am ready to offer an honest wager on it, that if you'll take up a census return, you'll always find that the place they select will have an overwhelming proportion of the female population.

In this way they are like the monks of old, who had an aptitude for a neat locality that has never been surpassed. If you place a civil engineer on the top of a mountain, he'll tell you very soon where there will be water, and generally, too, what direction the streams will run in; and I'd back a Scientific Congressite to hit off the spot where rooms full of green-veiled goddesses will be found, and where the dreariest old chemists and archæologists will be fondled and fêted and pampered for ten days or a fortnight, as if they were Phaethons or Apollos.

This is the real secret of the whole thing; it is what the Cockneys call an out "outing." Mineralogy and comparative anatomy are dead beat with a hard lecturing season. They are not creatures who can take their holiday at Homburg and Wiesbaden. The musty odour of their daily pursuits does not overwell fit them for general society; and, besides, they have an eye to profit. They cherish the thought of all the little thoughtful attentions and politenesses they are certain to meet in the provinces. They have only to determine, then, the interesting scene of their

labours, and all the rest "will be added to them." Let them receive ever so little, they are sure to give less. "The paper" they read has either been returned scores of times by some quarterly or monthly, or it is a dexterous synopsis of something they have done at more length elsewhere. Whenever it is original, take your oath on it it is utterly worthless. The coins the most lavish benevolence flung out of the carriage window never were guineas; and, indeed, for the mere pleasure of seeing the beggars fight for them, half-pennies sufficed just as well.

Now, I grudge no man his holiday. I have taken a great many myself in life, and always found them agree with me; neither do I grudge him the society of those who deem him agreeable or amusing; so that, if these learned Smellfunguses think this to be the appropriate mode of spending the long vacation, I have not a word against it. I only protest against my being obliged to believe that this is done in the interest of science. This I will not swallow.

That he who reads, and he who is waiting to read after him, may like it, I consent to. That going out about in great hives may be pleasant to the old drones who do it, I concede; that Bath, or Leamington, or Tunbridge, or any semi-detached-from-civilization little place, may feel its importance increased by playing host to red-sandstone people and beetle-gatherers, is all intelligible enough; only, again I say, don't ask me to accept this as scientific. You may talk till you're hoarse, but I'll not believe "these crusts to be mutton."

Popularizing science, as it is called, is like playing whist for nothing. No man ever learned *that* way, take my word for it; but there is a worse feature in

the affair than all this. We English are a very routine people, and our newspapers give a very truthful indication of the jog-trot regularity of our lives. From February to July we live on politics; from July to August we go to the sea, and read Kingsley's novels. Science and the partridges come next; and a pleasant time would it be if we could keep them each in his own sphere; but this is impossible. The ladies who do not shoot, geologize, botanize, archæologize, entomologize, and fraternize with all the dreariest old prozers of Europe, and bring back to their homes each day stores of the stalest trash—the study-sweepings of the most learned and long-winded people on the face of the globe.

Now, when I come back to a late dinner, with my eight brace of birds or my fifteen-pound salmon, I want to see Mrs. O'Dowd smiling, civil, and complimentary; and what do I meet? a woman overwhelmed with care, her eyes actually red with tears. It is the coalfields, she tells me, cannot last above twelve thousand years longer; or it is the earth's crust—she had it from Mr. Buckland himself—is positively a seventeenth of an inch thinner than it was in the time of Moses. I try to dispel her gloom by talking of my day's performance, and how many miles I have walked since breakfast, and she sneeringly tells me "there was a time when a very different race inhabited this earth, and when one might have seen a young Giant walking about with a mastodon at his heels—just as we see a butcher now with a bull-dog." This is downright offensive; it is personal too.

What right has Sir David Brewster or Professor Faraday to fill my wife's head with speculations about

the First man? I am, or at least I ought to be, the first man to her; and what bones of contention are these that these rash old crucible-heaters throw into the bosoms of families about the age of the world, and the signs it is giving of decrepitude?

There is a large market, I am told, for second-hand clothes in our colonies; the most flaring colours, the very gaudiest of uniforms, find purchasers. Why not, then, export these second-hand wares of science to Canada and the Cape? Ticket-o'-leave land would, I am sure, appreciate them, and not the less that some of them were stolen. We send them cricketers, why not chemists? We are enthusiastic about acclimatization; and O how glad I should be to know that we had sent them a ship of entomologists and a large supply of healthy zoologists in spawn, with ample directions for future treatment!

The real difficulty in these lecturings is, that you must be too high or too low for a great portion of your audience. You must either soar into the realms of the  $x + y$  people, who live on quadratic equations, or come down to that small twaddle of popular science—a very bread-and-milk diet for the grown-up adults of knowledge.

And we are overrun, actually overrun, with information. The press teems with treatises showing how everything is made, and why it was made; and I am very far from believing that the sum of our happiness is the greater in consequence. For the mere enjoyment of life—God forgive me for that “mere!”—but for the mere enjoyment of life, all this knowledge does not contribute very largely.

My enjoyment of M. Houdin was infinitely greater

before I read his book and learned how his tricks were done. The wonderful way he abstracted my waistcoat and sent it back to me in the little dog's mouth, and the way he cut open the same little dog to discover my watch which he had swallowed, were charming till I saw that they could be done with a box and a coil of wire and another gentleman who looked like one of the audience; and, though I am just as far off the ability to perform the trick as ever, I have lost all my desire to see it; and my surprise and my amazement have gone, never to return to me. In precisely the same degree have I suffered from these scientific teachers, and even to a worse extent, for they have robbed me of some illusions I had just as soon they would have spared me. I do not desire to have it impressed upon me so forcibly that I am only a compound of neutral salts, gelatine, fibrine, and adipose matter. It is no pleasure to me to regard Mrs. O'Dowd as a vehicle for phosphate of lime, various carbonates, and an appreciable portion of arsenic.

With all his pride of knowledge, the "Bourgeois Gentilhomme" was infinitely happier before he knew he had been talking "prose;" and I am sure most of us would sleep as soundly under the impression of being men and women, as after hearing an account of a complexity of structure, compared to which a steam-engine is simplicity, and a delicacy of fibre beside which a cobweb is almost a cable.

There is another and especial set who devote themselves to social science, who, so far as outrageous humbug goes, are worse than these; but I will not treat of them in a postscript. They shall have a page to themselves, and a full one.

## PARSONITIS.

WHAT is the meaning of this new malady which deluges Nice with men in white chokers, and renders Naples like a town under an (Episcopal) visitation? It is called—and called professionally too—"Parson's sore-throat;" and I am all curiosity to learn why it should peculiarly affect the clergy? Surely vocal exertion exists amongst the laity; lawyers, members of Parliament, auctioneers, and actors, not to speak of lieutenants in the navy, are occasionally loud of speech and profuse of intonation.

The coarser themes that form the staple of bar eloquence, the sterner stuff that men talk on the hustling, the rantings of the stage, and the roaring of the sea-service, might naturally strain the organs fully as much as the most impassioned appeals from the pulpit; and yet how is it that there is no such thing known to physic as Old Bailey Bronchitis or Parliamentary Phthisis? Nor are the watering-places of the Continent filled with legal gentlemen, usually in the charge of a bevy of female friends, who kindly do the talking for them. A mute member of Parliament or a muzzled Queen's Counsel is never met with, but I'll engage to find you five-and-twenty speechless Parsons in every



Italian city with a south aspect, mild air, and a large female element in the society.

I have inquired largely amongst my medical friends what is the reason of this strange fact. What can it be in their calling that renders these men more liable to vocal derangements than the other talkers of humanity? The same unsatisfactory answer always met me—It is the preaching does it.

Now, why should pulpit eloquence be more exacting than all other forms of oratory? Is not the place from which the parson speaks rather a check upon than an incentive to those rhetorical flights whose successes are dependent on bold bursts of passion? Torrents of words poured forth in all the exuberance of a flood—apostrophes that, for their effect, call for the wildest imageries conveyed in tones no less startling, the withering storm of invective, the overwhelming avalanche of abuse—have no place in the pulpit, where the very themes inspire self-control, restraint, moderation, a manner of winning persuasion, and a tone at once equable and conciliating. Are these the subjects which demand a chest swollen and distended, and bronchial tubes strained like the cylinders of high-pressure engines? How can preaching, I ask, be the cause of all this distress? Why must these calm gentle men, of easy lives, and well-regulated habits, crack their voices in efforts which call for no inordinate power, and which are, after all, most successful when conveyed in tones very slightly raised above those of ordinary conversation? That the criminal lawyer who has badgered his witnesses in a three hours' cross-examination, and then addressed a five hours' speech to the jury, should go home hoarse as a bull-frog, if not

actually voiceless, I can well understand. This man has been performing every instrument of the orchestra with his one poor throat. From oboe to ophicleide he has explored them all—in entreaty, conviction, scorn, pathos, defamation, ridicule, and lastly, to wind up, religion. No wonder if he should only be able to make signs to his wife at dinner, and pantomime his wishes for food and drink. But the Parson—the parson of honeyed words and dulcet accents—the bland, smooth-cheeked, oleaginous angel, the very creak of whose shoes whisper patience—he has none of these moods of violence; for, be it remembered, we talk of sin with far less of reprobation than of the individual sinner; and no one that ever I have heard laid the same stress on the Decalogue as the most commonplace Quarter Session chairman will do in sentencing a delinquent to the game-laws. The abstract never has that tangible reality about it that the smallest instance possesses; and for this reason, again, I say the parson's task exacts less strain, less violent effort, than that of other public speakers. And why, for the third time, I ask, are these men the victims of an especial disease that now goes by their name, and promises, like the Painter's Colic, to show the perils that attach to a peculiar calling? The fact is there; there is no denying it: the speechless curates of the Jardin Anglais at Nice, the voiceless vicars of the Pincian, prove it.

Physicians, I am told, confess themselves little able to deal with this malady; they treat, and treat, and treat it, and end, as they ever do when baffled, by sending the patient abroad. Law and medicine have this much in common, that, whenever they are fairly beaten, “they change the venue.”

Hence is it that every sheltered angle on the Mediterranean, every warm nook on the "Corniche," has its three, four, or five mild-faced, pale men, sauntering amongst the orange groves, and whispering through a respirator. There is something so interesting in these people, deserted in a measure by physic, and left to the slow influences of climate—soft airs and softer attentions being their only medicaments—that I found myself eagerly engaged in thinking, first, what it might be that predisposed to the affection; and, secondly, how it might be met by precaution. Cure, I need not say, I was not presumptuous enough to consider.

I cannot now record how the subject baffled me—what combinations of difficulty met me here, what new and unexpected phenomena started up there; but I went steadily, carefully on. I amassed my facts, I registered my observations; and at last—I hope it is not in vain boastfulness I declare it—I solved my problem. Few words will tell my explanation. The Parson throat is not the malady of necessarily loud talkers or energetic speakers; it is not induced by exaggerated efforts in the pulpit; it is not brought on by terrific denunciations delivered in the trumpet-call, or mild entreaties insinuated in the flute-stop of the human organ. It is simply and purely brought on by men persisting in preaching in an assumed unnatural voice—a conventional voice, imagined, I suppose, to be the most appropriate tone to call sinners from their wickedness and teach them to live better. You are startled by my explanation, but grant me a brief hearing. Who are the victims of this throat-affection? Not the high-and-dry old rubicund parsons, with bright frank eyes and well-rounded chins, neat of dress, knowing in

horse-flesh, strong in horticulture. These hale and healthy fellows have one voice, just as they have one nature; the same note that summons the gardener to look after the dahlias cries to the congregation to take care of their souls. They are not, perhaps, out-and-out divines; there is a bucolic element through them that makes them what Sydney Smith used to call "Squarsons." They are, at all events, a very noble set of fellows and thorough gentlemen. These men are totally free from parsonitis; a case has never been known amongst them. Next come more muscular Christians, whose throats, attuned to the hunting-field, could perform, if called on, the office of a railroad whistle. These have no touch of the complaint.

All "Colenso," I am told, is exempt, which is the more singular, as the men who deny everything and oppose every one are necessarily called on for vocal efforts of the most forcible kind. This is remarkable.

It is, then, amongst the more distinctively pious of the clergy that the disease commits its ravages—those who, by distinctive epithet, are called Evangelicals. Now there are numbers of these—vast numbers—who labour throughout their whole lives, and labour arduously, untouched by the affection. They are of all classes of the clergy the most untiring, the most devoted, and the most intensely imbued with the duties of their calling; but there are others who have all their zeal, all their devotion, and all their sincerity, and none of their abilities. These men, eager to emulate the usefulness of their superior brethren, bent on displaying in themselves the splendid success around them, cannot rise to the intellectual heights of their more gifted

neighbours, and are driven to imitate not the well-argued statement—not the close narrative of facts—not the impassioned appeal or the startling exhortation, but simply the tone of voice in which these were conveyed. Hence is it that these men, good and excellent men in every way, but of very commonplace minds and unelevated views, copy the one sole trait that has no merit or value—the tone and delivery of those whose manner is simply the offspring of their own over-charged minds.

They denounce without force, they entreat without persuasion. They paint without colour, and they mould and leave no form after them. They rant, rave, and riot, sob, shudder, and weep ; and all the result is stunned ears to the congregation and sore throats to themselves. They are ineffective, because they are not natural. It is their own intense unreality destroys all their usefulness and mars all their efforts at good.

The very fact that a man is addressing you in a counterfeit voice impugns his sincerity ; for be it remembered these are not the men who carry you away by the magic power of their eloquence, bearing you aloft to a region high above all you have ever soared in, and enchanting you with visions that only Genius discloses to mortal eyes. The men I mean here are taken from the common heap of humanity : they have few gifts, they have no graces ; and whenever they borrow an illustration or steal a figure from their more ornate brethren, they use it as awkwardly as the Otaheitan chief who wore his copper saucepan as a helmet.

A perverse ambition to be something that nature never meant them for—an insensate desire to emulate

what is far and away beyond their reach—stirs them up to these furious efforts ; and there is a something in the effect of a man's voice upon himself—a sort of reduplication of self-esteem—that is positively intoxicating. They fancy that they have discovered the secret, caught the trick of success, and they are madly eager and impatient for the day when they, too, shall send a congregation away overcome with hysteric emotion, panting with religious excitement, and thirsting for more. These men, like all imitators, only copy the faults of their models. Like the gentleman who in reading Locke mistook the peculiarities of style for points in the argument, they treasure up all the eccentricities of some popular preacher, and retail them as excellencies. Such are the victims of Parsonitis. These are the men that an austere Nemesis sends over the Alps mute and voiceless ; and, to *my* thinking, far more persuasive in the eloquence of their silent gentleness than ever they were in this rapt and erratic oratory.

Let the Rev. Paul Slowcoach cease to emulate the Rev. Hugh Highflier ; let him be simple, natural, and unaffected ; let him employ the same earnestness in the pulpit to save sinners that he would make use of to exhort Mrs. S. to some act of domestic economy, or to restrain a restive son from indiscretion. Let him be real, earnest, and truthful to his own nature. In one word, let him avoid all mention of Mesopotamia, and I'll warrant him he'll suffer very little from the pangs of Parsonitis.

But one word more. Should any impartial layman imagine that the cause I have here stated is insufficient for the effect—should he maintain that a mere affecta-

tion could scarcely produce a malady,—I only ask him to perform a walk of say ten miles daily on the tips of his toes. Let him try this for a month; and if his back-sinews do not admonish him to return to ordinary progression, my name isn't Cornelius.

## ABOUT DOCTORS.

I READ in the French papers, under the heading “Interesting to Physicians,” that a Doctor has been sentenced to fine and imprisonment for having divulged the malady of a patient, and in this way occasioned him heavy injury.

Without for a moment questioning the justice of this conviction, it appears to me a curious trait of our age and manners that such a case should ever have come to trial at all. That we make our revelations to the Doctor under the seal of secrecy, is intelligible enough; but that the law should confirm the bond is, I own, something new to me. In the honourable confidence between the Doctor and his patient I have never recognized anything beyond the trustfulness so essential to a beneficial result. The Doctor seeks to cure, and the patient to be cured, and for this reason all concealment that might mar or impede this end would be foolish and injurious; and it is not easy to imagine any amount of *amour propre* that would peril health—perhaps life—for the mere gratification of its peculiar vanity. The French Code, however, takes care that this question should not be left to a mere mutual understanding, but actually places the Doctor



in the position of a Confessor, who is bound under no circumstances to divulge the revelations that are made to him.

It is certainly a proud thought to feel that in the class and status of our medical men in England we have a security far stronger than a statute could confer. I cannot call to mind a single case where a complaint of this kind has been heard,—and all from the simple fact, that with us Doctors were gentlemen before they were physicians, and never forgot to be so after.

It is not perhaps the loftiest, but it is the most practical way to put the point—that in the market-price of any commodity we have the truest estimate of its value. Now, between the Doctor whose fee is a guinea and him whose honorarium is two francs, there is an interval in social position represented by that between the two sums. The one, so far as culture, habits, tone of thought, and manners go, is the equal of any he visits; the other is—very often at least—about as well-bred as your valet.

The one is a gentleman, with whom all intercourse is easy and unconstrained; the other a sort of hybrid very often between cultivation and savagery, with whom it is not easy to say how you are to treat, and who is by no means unlikely to misinterpret every revelation of habits totally unlike all that he is himself accustomed to.

Now there can be no over-estimating the value of a congenial Doctor. Instead of dreading the hour of the visit, picturing it to our minds as the interval of increased suffering and annoyance, to feel it as the sunny spot of our day—the pleasantest break in

he long languor of the sick-bed—is a marvellous benefit.

This, I am bold to say, is essentially to be found in England above all other countries. George IV., who was a consummate tactician in conversation,—all the disparaging estimates of him that have been formed—and some of them I firmly believe to have been unfair—have never denied him this gift,—used to say that Doctors were essentially the pleasantest talkers he had ever met. They have that happy blending of knowledge of actual life with book-learning, which makes them thorough men of the world, without the unpleasing asperity that pertains to those who have bought their experiences too dearly. For, be it remembered, few men see more of the best side of human nature than the Doctor; and it is an unspeakable advantage to get an insight into the secrets of the heart, and yet not to have attached any stain to one's self in the pursuit, and, even while investigating a moral pestilence, never to have risked the perils of a contagion

If it were not that I should be incurring in another form the very defect from whose taint I believe Doctors to be exempt, I could tell some curious instances in which the physician obtained knowledge of intentions and projects in the minds of great statesmen, on which they had not at the time fully determined, but were actually canvassing and balancing—weighing the benefit and counting the cost—and one syllable about which they never dropped to a colleague.

What a benefit is it to have a body of men like this in a country where political action is so easy to

discount into gold, and where the certainty of this enactment or the repeal of that could resolve itself into fortune to-morrow! Nor is it small praise to a profession when we can say that what in other lands is guarded by legal enactment, and fenced by the protection of the tribunals, can be, and is, in our country, left to the honourable feeling and right-hearted spirit of true gentlemen.

There is another service Doctors have rendered society, and I declare I have never found it either acknowledged or recognized. Of all men, there are none so vigilantly on the watch to protect the public from that pestilence of humbug and deceit which, whether it call itself spiritualism, mesmeric agency, clairvoyance, or any other fashionable trickery of the day, has now resolved itself into a career, and has assumed all the outward signs and dignities of a profession.

To all these the Doctor is the sworn foe, and very frequently to his personal detriment and loss. Who has not heard at the dinner-table or the fireside the most outrageous assertions of phenomena, alleged to be perfectly in accordance with natural laws, but of which experience only records one instance or two perhaps in five or six centuries, met by the calm wisdom of the physician, the one man present, perhaps, able to explain the apparent miracle or refute the palpable absurdity? It has been more than once my own fortune to have witnessed such controversy, and I have never done so without a sense of gratitude that there were disseminated throughout every walk of our social system these upright and honest guardians of truth.

It would be a very curious and a very subtle subject for inquiry, to investigate the share of the Doctors in the political education of society. The men who go everywhere, mix with all ranks and gradations of men, talk with each of them on the topics of the day, learning how class and condition influence opinions and modify judgments, must gain an immense insight into the applicability of any measure, and into its bearing on the different gradations of society. With this knowledge, too, they must be able to disseminate their own ideas with considerable power, and enforce their own opinions by arguments derived from various sources, doing these things, not through the weight and power of a blind obedience, as the priest might, but by force of reason, by the exercise of a cultivated understanding aided by especial opportunity. If I were a statesman, I would cultivate these men. I say this in no sense that implies corruption, but I would regard them as an immense agency in the government of mankind; and I would take especial pains to learn their sentiments on measures which touch the social relations of the world, and secure, so far as I might, their honourable aid and co-operation.

They have replaced the Priest in that peculiar confidence men accord to those who are theirs, not by blood or kindred, but by the operation of that mysterious relationship that unites relief to suffering.

I say again, I would cultivate the Doctors. They see more, hear more, and know more than other men, and it would be my task to make them the channels of opinion on the interesting topics of the day, by extending to them the amplest confidence and the freest access to information.

I would open to them every avenue to the truth, every access to the formation of correct judgment, and leave the working of the system—and leave it with all confidence—to what I believe, and assert to be, their unimpeachable honour and integrity.

## ON CERTAIN DROLL PEOPLE.

I WISH there was a society for the suppression of our droll people. Don't mistake me: I do not mean veritable wits—men of infinite jest, gossip, and humour—but the so-called drolls, who say dry things in a dry voice, relate stories dramatically, give imitations, and occasionally sing songs. Most cities have three or four of these, and drearier adjuncts to social stupidity I know not. First of all, these creatures have their entertainments as “cut and dried” as any stage-player. There is nothing spontaneous, nothing of *apropos*, about them. What they say or sing has been written for them, or by them, it matters not which; and in the very fact that they can go on repeating it for years, you have the measure of their capacity and their taste.

I suspect that the institution is an English one—at least, I cannot at this moment remember having ever met one of these people either German, French, Italian, or Spanish. No other nation, I am certain, would endure the infliction but our own. It must be to a people hopelessly unable to amuse themselves, longing for some pastime without knowing what it should be, and trained to believe the *Adelphi* or the *Strand* amusing, that these insufferable bores could possibly be welcome.

Our English attempts at fun are, like our efforts at statuary, very ungainly and awkward, and only productive of laughter and ridicule. We are a dry, grave, occasionally humoristic people, and so intently bent on the practical, that we require an illustration to be as efficient as the thing it typifies—that is, we want the shadow to be as good flesh and bone as the substance. Our droll is therefore a great boon to us; “he makes me laugh,” is an expression compounded of three parts self-esteem and one part contempt. It is the last word of the helplessness of him who never yet amused any one, and has yet an expression of disparagement for the effort made to interest himself. Yet is the droll in request. Without him how is the dreary evening party to be carried through? How is that hour to be reached when it is meet for people to say “good-night” without any show of the weariness that weighs on them?

How are the incongruous elements of society to be amalgamated without this reconciling ingredient, who, at least, inspires one sentiment in common amongst them—a sincere contempt for himself? We have agreed in England that the man who condescends to please us must be more or less of an adventurer. Nobody with any honest calling or decent means of livelihood would think of being amusing. From this axiom it comes that the drolls are ever taken from the hopeless categories of mankind; and thus, in the same spirit with which we give all the good music to the devil, we devote the profession of wit to the poorest intelligences amongst us. Drolls are therefore depreciated—depreciated, but cultivated. Our tone is, have them and maltreat them. Now, I wonder what would take place in Great Britain if the drolls were to combine and

strike work—declare that they knew their social claims, and felt their own importance—that until some more liberal treatment should be secured them by law, not another joke should be uttered, not the shadow of a *bon mot* be detected. Dinners, *déjeûners*, picnics, and routs might go on, with what material resources cookery, confectionery, and a cellar could provide, but as regards the most ethereal elements there would be a famine. Why, dancing without music would be nothing to it. The company might as well try to be their own orchestra as their own jester. And is not this a most humiliating avowal? Here you are, a party, let us say, of sixteen souls ranged round a dinner-table. You are well fed and well ministered to, and yet somehow the thing flags. The talk is *per saltum*—broken and in jets; there is no movement, no *ensemble*, for somehow you want the hardihood of a certain social adventurer, who will “go in” recklessly to assert something, contradict something, or explain something, with a dash of indifference as to consequences that will inspire the rest with some of his own hardihood. The great thing is to shock Mrs. Grundy; till that be done, her sway is indisputable. This man is quite prepared for such a service. He has a shot that will startle her; he has a story that will stun her. Now, I ask, where, out of the professional ranks, are you to meet with these qualities? and if you really want them—if they be a requirement of your age and your social system, why—I ask again—why not have them of the best? why not secure the good article, instead of putting up with the poor counterfeit? It is for this reason I say, Suppress your present drolls, and make a profession of it.



There may come an age in which lawyers will defend prisoners without a fee, and physicians go forth to cure the sick unrewarded. In such a glorious millennium, droll people will doubtless be found ready to be witty without being fed. Till this blessed time shall arrive, however, let us provide for human wants with human foresight. Our age is a hard-pressed, overworked age. We come daily to our homes jaded, wearied, and exhausted; our money-seeking is a hard fight, and leaves us very tired towards the close of the day's battle. We find, then, that we need a refresher after it—a sort of moral “schnaps”—that may rally us into that condition in which enjoyment becomes possible. To this end, therefore, do I say, let us not destroy our healthy appetite by a corrupted or adulterated liquor. Let, in fact, the wits who are to amuse us be really wits—no amateur performers, no dilettanti “Drolls,” but trained, tried, and approved practitioners—licentiates in humour, duly qualified to practise in the best society—men who would no more repeat a known anecdote than Francatelli would reheate a cutlet. Trained in all the dialectics of the dinner-table, such men know the exact amount of talk that can be administered during a course; and, in their marvellous tact, are they able to regulate the discursive conversationalists around them, giving time and emphasis and accent, just as Costa imposes these qualities over an unruly orchestra.

It is an inconceivable mistake to commit the task of amusing to the book-writers. Men who are much versed in the world's affairs have really little time for reading—they read hastily, and judge imperfectly; we want, therefore, a society who shall disseminate the

popular topics of the day—not carelessly or inaccurately, but neatly, appropriately, and exactly—able to condense a debate into the time of the soup, or give a sketch of a popular novel in the space of an *entrée*. What a savour and relish would such men impart to society! The mass of people talk very ill. They talk loosely—loosely as to fact, and more loosely as to expression. They mistake what they read, mistake what they hear, not from wilfulness, but out of that sloppy insipid carelessness which is assumed to be a feature of good-breeding—accuracy being to the men of fashion about as vulgar an attribute as haste or hurry. Now, the example of a professional talker will have great influence in suppressing this dreary inanity.

I know—I am well aware—that what I propose will be a death-blow to “haw-haw,” and a fatal injury to “you know;” but who regrets them? Is it not a generation which has grieved us long enough? Have they not lowered the national credit for pleasantry to the verge of bankruptcy? Are we not come to that pass that we must repudiate our droll people, or consent to be deemed the stupidest nation in Christendom?

Add to the Civil Service Commission, then, an examination for diners-out. Make a pursuit, a regular career, of the practice, and see what abilities and what excellences you will attract to it. Abandoning conversation to pretenders, is like leaving medicine to the quacks, or theology to the street-preachers. I have seen a deal of life, and you may take my word for it, amateurs never attain any high excellence, except it be in wickedness!

## THE PEOPLE WHO COME LATE.

Will any one tell me who are the people who habitually come late to dinner? Are they merely erratic, abnormal instances, or are they, as I opine, a class? Any treatment that we may adopt towards them should mainly depend on the category to which they belong.

While Thuggee prevailed in India, it was a considerable time before it was ascertained that men were banded together for assassination. It seemed so horrible, that nothing short of an overwhelming conviction would have induced one to accept it as a fact. At last, however, the whole organization was revealed, and it was shown that men were led into this fearful compact, not through menace or threat, but of their own free will, and actually, at times, with a zeal and eagerness that savoured of insanity. Now, I am curious to know if our social destroyers be Thugs. Are they members of a secret society banded together to interfere with human happiness, and render what ought to be the pleasantest portion of our lives, periods of anxiety, irritation, and discomfort?

I have given the matter much consideration, for I have been taught some cruel experiences of its hardships, and I incline to believe that these men are really

a distinct section of society—that they regard life from the same point of view, take the same estimate of their own social claims, and almost invariably adopt the same tactics in their dealings with the world.

The story of Alcibiades and his dog has another reading from that usually accorded to it. When that clever man upon town cut a piece off his dog's tail to divert the scandal-mongers of Athens from attending to his more serious derelictions, he showed how thoroughly he understood the fact, that men of eminence will ever be exposed to the libellous tongues of the smaller people around them, and that it is a wise policy to throw out for them some bait, in the pursuit of which they may lose sight of more important booty.

But there are folk who have no resemblance whatever to Alcibiades—who are neither clever, nor witty, nor genial, nor amusing; and when *they* cut an inch off their dog's tail, they do it simply and purely that, by this small singularity, they may attract to themselves a degree of notice which nothing in their lives or characters could possibly warrant; they do it that they may be in men's mouths for a passing moment, and enjoy the notoriety they imagine to be fame.

It is to this category your late man belongs. He calculates coolly on the ills his want of punctuality produces—the vexation, the dreariness, the *ennui*. He ponders over the irritation of the host and weariness of the guests; he feels that he has driven a cook to the verge of despair, and made an intended pleasure a positive penalty; he knows well how he will be canvassed by the company, his merits weighed, and his claims discussed, and that the “finding” will not be the

decision of an over-favourable jury; and yet he is repaid for all the censure and detraction that awaits him—for every question as to his status and every doubt of his capacity—by the single fact that he has made himself important. Great crimes have been committed through no other incentive than the insensate passion for notoriety, and it is the self-same desire of small minds that leads to the offence I stigmatize. These creatures, unable to amuse, incapable to interest, without even one of the qualities that have an attraction for society, are still able, by merely interfering with the pleasure of others, to make themselves remembered and noteworthy.

That I am not unwarrantably severe on them, I appeal to all who either give dinners or eat those of their friends. To the former I ask, and ask confidently, Are not the people who keep you waiting almost invariably the least valued of your acquaintance? Is not the man who arrives late, the man who need not arrive at all? Has the creature who has destroyed the fish and ruined the *entrée*, one, even one, quality to indemnify you for the damage?

Take the late men of your acquaintance, and answer me, Have you ever met one of them able, by the charm of his converse or the captivation of his manners, to obliterate the memory of the dreary forty-five minutes your friends sat in the condemned cell of your drawing-room, longing for the last pang to be over?

If your experiences be happy in this respect, *mine* are not. I openly proclaim that my late men are the bores of my acquaintance. Tardy in coming, and drearier when they come, they open the curious

question, whether one would be sorrier if they died, or more miserable that they are alive ?

If any doubt could be entertained as to the studied intention of this practice, it is at once dispelled by the mode of the late man's *entrée*. It is not in the least like *his* approach whose coming has been delayed by some unfortunate mischance or some unforeseen casualty ; there is no confusion, no eager anxiety to explain or apologize. Far from it ; he makes a sort of triumphal entry, and, with chest protruded and head erect, declares the pride he feels in being of sufficient consequence to have curdled the milk of human kindness in some dozen natures, and converted a meeting for pleasure into a penalty and a suffering.

Next to these in point of annoyance are they who send you their apologies an hour before your dinner, and they too are a class—a distinctly organized class. These people forget that in all dinners worth the name, the company are apportioned as carefully as the crew of a racing-boat, and you can no more add to than diminish their number. The quality of the “bow oar” cannot be transferred to the “stroke,” nor can two be seated on one bench, or one place be left vacant. To destroy the symmetry of your dinner—the “trim,” so to say, of the company—is a serious offence, and doubly so when committed with prepense and malice aforethought ; and yet there are people who do this, on the same calculation as the “Late comers,” that they may enjoy the importance of being arraigned for their absence, and revel in the consciousness that the company they could not have charmed by their presence has been totally damped and dispirited by their absence—for so it is. nothing

short of superhuman geniality can conquer the gloom of an empty place.

I remember once—it was a long time ago—a dinner in an Irish country-house, of which an Archbishop was to have formed the great gun. Besides his Episcopal dignity he was a man of weight and influence, which gave him a standing in the country it behoved county members to look to. He was also a great horticulturalist, and fond of country life and pursuits. Our host understood well all these varied claims, and took great pains to make his dinner-party of such material as might best consort with his great guest's humour. What, however, was his discomfiture to find that his Grace's chaplain arrived to make the Archbishop's apologies, and convey his sincere regret at some untoward impediment to the promised pleasure! He brought with him, however, an enormous gourd or pumpkin grown in the Episcopal hothouse; and this, with an air of well-assumed admiration, our host directed should be placed in the chair which his Grace ought to have occupied, directing to the comely vegetable much of his talk during the dinner; and when the time of coffee came, saying as they arose, "In all my experience of his Grace, I never knew him so agreeable as to-day."

We are not, however, all of us, able to pay off, by a smart epigram like this, our dreary defaulters; and I own I feel deep humiliation at the thought of how much pleasure, how much social enjoyment, how much actual happiness, is at the disposal of people who can contribute so wonderfully little to them all.

There is another feature of the case not to be entirely overlooked. In the deference you show by wait-

ing for the late comer, or in your distress at the absence of him who comes not at all, your other guests fancy they detect some deep sense of obligation to the man who usurps so much of authority over you, and they infer at once that he is your patron or your protector, that he has lent you money or dragged you out of some awkward scrape or other, and that you are bound over, under the very heaviest of recognizances, to treat him with all deference and respect.

I am certain that I have suffered once or twice in my life, if not oftener, from this pleasant imputation, and it has obliged me to curtail my madeira at dinner lest I should be seized with an apoplexy.

In England, I believe, there is no hour for dinner. Your eight o'clock may be half-past, may be nine, perhaps ten ; but abroad, over the Continent generally, the hour named is the hour really intended, and especially so at Embassies and Legations, so that the London *insouciance* of arriving within three-quarters of an hour of the time is simply bad manners or ignorance. I rejoice to say that the impertinence of the late man would meet no toleration there. Short of royalty, or something like its representative, none would be waited for ; but still, to be peremptory in such matters, one must be a man of a certain mark or standing. The Minister can do with dignity what in the Secretary would be pedantry or pretension ; and, in fact, in small things as well as in great, it is very pleasant to stand on a high rung of the ladder called life.

They who so stand have the law in their own hands ; and I own I rejoice whenever I witness its severe administration, and mark the shame and confusion with which a late man shuffles to his place amongst the



seated guests, and tries to cover by an apology that which he had planned to execute as a triumph.

We had an old Irish Chief Baron once, whose practice it was to have the late arrivals shown into a room where a dessert was laid out, and informed that dinner was over, and the company had assembled in the drawing-room. In this way they might reflect over dried figs and filberts, and realize to their own conscience-stricken intelligences the enormity of the offence.

I may close this by a malapropos which once occurred to Lord Ponsonby at Vienna. He was to dine at Prince Metternich's, but arrived by some mischance very late. There was, however, one more guest yet to come, Baron Seebach, the Saxon Minister, with whom the hostess was very intimate. She was exceedingly shortsighted : and as Lord Ponsonby came forward, not catching his name, and believing him to be Seebach, she met him abruptly, and cried out, "Oh ! vieux scélérat, pour-quoi est-ce que vous venez si tard ?" It need not be said what were the shame and confusion on either side.

I conclude now with the hope that, if I have not made the late man punctual, I have at least persuaded his host that he ought not to wait for him.

## GOING INTO PARLIAMENT.

LOOKING out at life from the very narrow loophole at which I sit, I scarcely like to affirm anything very positively ; but, so far as I am able to see, it seems to me that I never remember a time in which so many men aspired to public life as the present. There were always, and I trust there always will be, a large class to whom Parliament will be a natural and suitable ambition. The House of Commons has the proud prerogative of representing every interest of the kingdom. The landowner, the millowner, the man of ships, the man of mines, the friend of Exeter Hall, the advocate of the Pope. Even crotchets and caprices have their members ; and there are men who tinker about street-organs or licenses to oyster-cellars, but who really, as they consume their own smoke, are small nuisances, and may easily be endured. Even bores are represented in Parliament ; and if the Brothers Davenport only live long enough amongst us, there is no reason why Mr. Howitt, for instance, should not stand up in the House to represent the spiritual interests of the nation. I like all this. I am certain that at the price of listening to an enormous amount of twaddle we purchase safety. One Idea would be a very troublesome and cantan-

kerous fellow if you would not let him talk, but with his free speech he is happy, and, better still, he is innocuous. However silly his project be, he is so certain to make it sillier by his advocacy of it, that it is right good policy to invite him to explain himself.

It would be hard, too, to deny a man who has contested his borough, borne the fag and the rough usage, the abuse, the insult, and the heavy cost of a contested election, the small privilege of hearing himself say "Sir," to the Speaker, though the shuffling sound of departing feet should make the sentence that followed inaudible. This, however, is a costly privilege; it is essentially the luxury of the rich man; for since we have taken such immense precautions against bribery, a seat in Parliament has become a far more expensive thing than ever it was before. The apparent paradox admits of an easy explanation. Have you not once or twice, if not oftener, in life drunk excellent claret in some remote country-house, where the owner's means were certainly not equal to such a luxury? The reason was, the duties were high, and the smuggler found it worth while to evade them. The reduced tariff, however, cut off the contraband, and though the legal article was cheaper, it never came so low in price as the "run" one. There is therefore now less smuggling into the House; but even the low duty is too high for the poor man.

This circumstance it is which makes it the more incomprehensible to me:—when men whose fortunes I am well aware are small, and whose positions would seem to call for every exercise of energy and industry, lounge into my room and tell me "they are going into Parliament." If these were all, or if even a fair

number of them were, very clever fellows—well read, well grounded, with good memories, fluent of speech endowed with much tact, and a happy address—I might say, though not exactly born to be statesmen, they might find a career in public life. The discipline of a government requires so many petty officers, that there is nothing unreasonable in such men expecting to be sergeants and corporals. The House, too, is a rare club; its gossip is the best gossip, its interests are the best interests, even its jobs and intrigues are finer, grander, better games of skill than any that ever engaged the wits and tried the temper of gamblers. I cannot imagine a sphere in which ability was so sure to have its legitimate sway and swing.

One cannot conceive a place, except it be the playground of a great school, where fair play is so sure to be the rule and practice. It is the one spot on earth where the weak cannot be browbeaten, and the strong cannot be a tyrant. It is the only arena the world has ever witnessed, wherein right-mindedness has obtained the force of talent, and mere honesty can hold its own against any odds in ability. I admit at once how proud a thing it is to belong to such an assemblage, and I only ask that the men who aspire to it should have something in proportion to the pretension. I mean that it is not enough that they have failed as barristers—broken down as novelists—been bankrupt as speculators, or unfortunate in any other career in life—that they should come here. The House of Commons is neither a reformatory nor an asylum. It was never intended to recall the wandering sheep of politics to the pleasant pasturages of office, or prove a refuge for the forlorn castaways—the street-walkers of the learned professions.

Johnson called patriotism the last refuge of a scoundrel. What if Parliament were to become the last resource of incapacity! I earnestly hope this may not be so. I ardently desire that other men's experiences may not be as my experiences. I long to think that the dreary creatures who come to show me the "twaddle" they have written to the free and independent electors of Snugborough, are not a wide-spread pestilence, but a small local disease invented for my especial torment. What mornings have I passed, listening to their opinions on currency, on the colonies, on the Catholics! what they would do about church-rates—how they would deal with the franchise. These are the aspiring creatures who mean to be terrible to Gladstone, and thorns in the side of Disraeli. There are others who vow themselves to committee life—who mean to pass their days in the smaller shrines of politics, and only pray to the saints who preside over railway rogueries and the peculations of public works. Last of all, there are the "Dundrearies" of statecraft, who know nothing themselves, nor ever knew any one who did—who want to be in the House because it is the right thing, and who feel about politics as did the Bourgeois Gentilhomme about prose—it was a fine thing to be talking it even unconsciously. These men, by some strange fatality, always speak of the achievement as an easy one. They know a "fellow" who can get them in for eight hundred or a thousand; and they tell you little anecdotes of electioneering rogueries you have often read in print, as part of the personal experiences of "the fellow" aforesaid. I own these men try me sorely, and even the bland temper with which nature has endowed me is at moments driven to

its last intrenchments. The affected contempt they assume for public life—the tone of “rogues all” they put on with respect to men in power, and the levity with which they treat responsibilities that the strongest are seen to stagger under—these are the things that push my patience to its limits.

It is all very well to say that if these men entered the House we should never hear of them; that they would be as completely ignored as if they sat in the reporters' gallery. Be it so; but I ask, Why should they be there at all? why should they aspire to be there? What fatal tendency of our age inclines men to adopt a career in all respects unsuited to them? When Pitt said of our octogenarian generals, “I don't know what effect they produce on the enemy, but I know that they frighten *me*,” he expressed what I very strongly feel about these small boys of politics—they fill me with fear and misgiving. The numbers of such men assuming airs of statecraft, talking of great questions, and identifying themselves and their small natures with measures of moment, has the same effect in political life as the great issue of a depreciated paper currency has in finance. These are the greenbacks of public life; and as a general election is approaching, let me caution constituencies against making them a legal tender, or even for a moment supposing they are good as gold.

## CONTINENTAL EXCURSIONISTS.

IN common with others of my countrymen who live much abroad, I have often had to deplore the unfair estimate of England that must be made by commenting on the singular specimens of man and woman-hood that fill the railroad trains, crowd the steamboats, and deluge the hotels of the Continent. How often have I had to assure inquiring foreigners that these people were not the *élite* of our nation! With what pains have I impressed upon them that these men and women represent habits and ways and modes of thought which a stranger might travel England in its length and breadth without once encountering, and that to predicate English life from such examples would be a grievous injustice!

This evil, however, has now developed itself in a form of exaggeration for which I was in no way prepared. It seems that some enterprising and unscrupulous man has devised the project of conducting some forty or fifty persons, irrespective of age or sex, from London to Naples and back for a fixed sum. He contracts to carry them, feed them, lodge them, and amuse them. They are to be found in diet, theatricals, sculpture,

carved-wood, frescoes, washing, and roulette. In a word, they are to be "done for" in the most complete manner, and nothing called for on their part but a payment of so many pounds sterling, and all the details of the road or the inn, the playhouse, the gallery, or the museum, will be carefully attended to by this providential personage, whose name assuredly ought to be Barnum!

When I read the scheme first in a newspaper advertisement I caught at the hope that the speculation would break down. I assured myself that, though two or three unhappy and misguided creatures, destitute of friends and advisers, might be found to embrace such an offer, there would not be any real class from which such recruiting could be drawn. I imagined, besides, that the characteristic independence of Englishmen would revolt against a plan that reduces the traveller to the level of his trunk, and obliterates every trace and trait of the individual. I was all wrong: the thing has "taken"—the project is a success; and, as I write, the cities of Italy are deluged with droves of these creatures, for they never separate, and you see them, forty in number, pouring along a street with their director—now in front, now at the rear—circling around them like a sheep dog—and really the process is as like herding as may be. I have already met three flocks, and anything so uncouth I never saw before—the men, mostly elderly, dreary, sad-looking, evidently bored and tired—the women, somewhat younger, travel-tossed and crumpled, but intensely lively, wide-awake, and facetious. Indeed, to judge from the continual sparkle of the eye and the uneasy quiver of the mouth, one would say that they thought the Continent was a pac-



tical joke, and all foreigners as good fun as anything at Astley's. When foreigners first inquired of me what this strange invasion might mean—for there was a sort of vague suspicion it had some religious propaganda in the distance—I tried to turn off the investigation by some platitude about English eccentricity, and that passion for anything odd that marks our nation. Finding, however, that my explanation was received with distrust, I bethought me of what pretext I could frame as more plausible, and at last hit upon what I flatter myself was ingenious.

I took the most gossip-loving of my acquaintances aside, and under a solemn pledge of secrecy, which I well knew he would not keep, I told him that our Australian colonies had made such a rumpus of late about being made convict settlements, that we had adopted the cheap expedient of sending our rogues abroad to the Continent, apparently as tourists; and that, being well dressed and well treated, the project found favour with the knaves, who, after a few weeks, took themselves off in various directions as taste or inclination suggested. In fact, said I, in less than ten days you'll not see three, perhaps, of that considerable party we met a while ago in the cathedral; and then that fussy little bald man that you remarked took such trouble about them will return to England for more.

I cannot describe the horror with which he heard me—the scheme outdid in perfidy all that he had believed even of “la perfide Albion;” but it was so like us, that much he must say. It was so selfish and so saving and so insolently contemptuous towards all foreign countries, as though the most degraded

Englishman was still good enough company for the foreigner.

As I have since made a similar confidence to two others, my mind is relieved as to all the dire consequences of these invasions. Do not imagine that the remedy was too strong for the disease; far from it. I tell you deliberately it will be all but impossible to live abroad if these outpourings continue; for it is not merely that England swamps us with everything that is low-bred, vulgar, and ridiculous, but that these people, from the hour they set out, regard all foreign countries and their inhabitants as something in which they have a vested right. They have paid for the Continent as they paid for Cremorne, and they *will* have the worth of their money. They mean to eat it and drink it and junket it to the uttermost farthing. When the cutlet is overdone, or the cathedral disappoints them, it is not merely unsatisfactory—it is a “do”—a “sell”—a swindle—just as if the rockets should refuse to go up at Vauxhall, or the Catherine-wheels to play. Europe, in their eyes, is a great spectacle, like a show-piece at Covent Garden; and it is theirs to criticise the performance and laugh at the performers at will.

Now, if *we* are not acquiring French and Italian, foreigners are learning English; and I must say the acquisition redounds to them in other ways than pleasure, for what mortifying and impertinent things do not these “drove Bulls” say of all and everything around them!

Is it without reason that I protest against these Barnumites who now crowd the *tables d'hôte* and fill the fiacres, and whose great unmeaning looks of wonder and stolidity meet one at every corner?

What a blessing it was for our ministers and envoys abroad that the passport system was abrogated before these people took to the road! Our legations abroad would otherwise be besieged like a union workhouse in a famine. One of the strangest peculiarities, too, of the vulgar Bull is his passion for talking what he believes to be French to his own minister or envoy on the Continent, whenever any accident may have brought them face to face.

One of our most distinguished diplomatists—a man whose reputation is now European—once told me that the ordinary work of his station was nothing compared with the worry, irritation, and annoyance he experienced from these people. He gave me an instance, too, and I rejoice to say that the victory did not, as is so often the case, lie with the Bore: “Vous êtes Minister d’Angleterre, I think,” said a pompous-looking elderly Bull, who once made his way into a room where my friend was writing, with a boldness all his own. The Minister saw that he was a stranger, ignorant of the place and its ways, and asked him if he could do anything for his service.

“Oui, oui—j’ai besoin——”

“I beg your pardon for interrupting; but as I am an Englishman, and you I apprehend to be another, let us talk English.”

“Oui, oui, je parle parfaitement.”

“Pray, sir, say what is it you want in the vernacular.”

“J’ai besoin, passport.”

“For what place?”

“Je crois que j’irai——”

“Tell me, sir, the name of the place, and your own name.”

"Moi? Je m'appelle Richard Govens; mais il y a Madame Govens, trois Mademoiselles Govens, Monsieur Jacques et Joseph Govens, and le tuteur."

"There—there, sir—you said Aix-la-Chapelle; do me the favour now to leave me to my own occupations. No—nothing to pay; good-morning."

No; he was not to be got rid of thus easily; for he continued in the same vile jargon to explain that he was familiar with foreign usages, and long habituated to travel abroad; and it was only by the employment of very energetic language that my friend ultimately persuaded him to withdraw and go about his business.

Three days after this dreary interview, however, there came to the Minister a long letter, dated Aix-la-Chapelle, and written in that strange tongue the writer imagined to be French. It was evidently a demand for some service to be rendered—some favour to be accorded—but so mysteriously veiled was the request in the complexity of the style, that my friend was totally unable to ascertain what had been asked of him. His reply, therefore, acknowledged the receipt of the epistle, and his inability to comprehend it. "I perceive, sir," continued he, "dimly and indistinctly indeed, that you wish me to do something for you, though what that something may be, the language of your request has totally obscured. I render you, however, the only service that appears to lie at my hands. I have corrected twenty-eight mistakes in the spelling, and seventeen in the grammar of your letter, which I now enclose, and have the honour to be," etc.

Though the pretentious tone of certain public speakers and occasional newspaper articles may deny it, the truth is, England has lost much of the influence

she once possessed over continental peoples. I know there are many ready to declare that they do not regret this. I am aware that the non-intervention policy has begotten a race of men who say, We want to trade with the foreigner, not to influence him. Let him buy our cottons and our cutlery, and we will not ask him to believe England a great country and its alliance a safeguard. I shall not contest these theses. I know enough of life never to dispute with people who are not mainly of my own opinion; but I go back to what I have asserted as a fact, that England no longer holds the high place she once held in the estimation of all nations of Europe; and equally advisedly do I say, that a great deal of the depreciation we have incurred is owing to the sort of people who come abroad, and are deemed by foreigners to represent us.

We have all of us heard in what disrepute certain woollen fabrics of ours were held in foreign markets a few years ago, because some unprincipled manufacturers deluged the Continent with ill-woven ill-dyed cloths, so that the word English, which was once the guarantee for goodness, became the stamp of an inferior and depreciated article. So has it been with our travellers. These devil's-dust tourists have spread over Europe, injuring our credit and damaging our character. Their crass ignorance is the very smallest of their sins. It is their overbearing insolence, their purse-strong insistence, their absurd pretension to be in a place abroad that they had never dreamed of aspiring to at home,—all these claims suggesting to the mind of the foreigner that he is in the presence of very distinguished and exalted representatives of Great Britain!

As long as it was open to one to deal with individual cases, he could talk of "oddity," "eccentricity," "strange specimens," and the like; but now they come in droves: what is to be done? Europe may turn on us one day on account of these "Raiders," as America is well disposed to do at this moment. Foreigners may say, "We desire to be able to pray in our churches, to hear in our theatres, to dine in our restaurants, but your people will not permit us. They come over, not in twos and threes, but in scores and hundreds, to stare and to laugh at us. They deride our church ceremonies, they ridicule our cookery, they criticise our dress, and they barbarize our language. How long are we to be patient under these endurance?"

Take my word for it, if these excursionists go on, nothing short of another war and another Wellington will ever place us where we once were in the estimation of Europe.

## A WORD FOR AN ILL-USED CLASS.

“GIVE a dog a bad name” was never more forcibly illustrated than by the manner in which the world regards what is called tuft-hunting. Now tuft-hunting, like usury, has got into disfavour entirely by the class of men who have adopted it as a career, instead of accepting it as an accident of their station. The ancient Parasite was very little more or less than a modern diner-out: he was a gentleman of parts and ability, with great adaptiveness and consummate tact; he was an admirable talker, and, what is far rarer, a finished listener. He was not as rich as the great man to whose fortunes he attached himself, but in every other respect he was infinitely his superior. His task in life was a difficult one. It was not merely to exercise his mental gifts and display his acquirements for the pleasure and instruction of his host and his friends, but so to merge his individuality in his accomplishments, that nothing of the man remained but what was amusing or interesting.

If I had lived in those days and been rich enough to do it, I should have surrounded myself with these creatures. I'd have had them of every fashion and

age and complexion. I cannot imagine a pleasanter exercise of wealth than to create about one an atmosphere of wit, sound sense, knowledge of life, and refined taste—all dashed with that humorous appreciation of humanity, in its varied aspects, which is the quality of all others that makes a man truly companionable. I believe the Greeks understood this thoroughly, and I take it that they are not more our masters in marble than in the wonderful perfection to which they elevated tuft-hunting.

Instead, therefore, of discouraging the practice—ridiculing its use and decrying its habit—I would like, if I could, to restore it to its ancient dignity, and install it where it ought to be, amongst the fine arts. First of all, no man can possibly be a proficient in the art who is not very considerably and very variously gifted. The tuft-hunter—I hate the word, but I have no other—is essentially a man highly accomplished; but he is, besides, a man of emergencies. It is not alone that he must do each thing a little better than any one else, but he must be ready to do it at any moment he may be called on. While, in the exercise of his judgment, he must be prepared to be witty; and under the dreariest infliction of listening to a proser, he must be ready to recover himself and display his faculties in all their brightness.

Wide as is his knowledge, it is not one half so wide as his sympathy. He sympathizes with my lord and my lady, and with my lord's friend and my lady's admirer, and with the eldest son and all the daughters, and occasionally, of a morning in the garden, with the governess, and always with the head groom, and very often with the gardener; he sympathizes with the



butler and the gamekeeper, and he has even a little sympathy for the chaplain, who loves it much, and fancies it means promotion.

Now, your real tuft-hunter—your man who aspires to the high honour of the “caste”—is not to be confounded with one of those useful but humble followers who secure boxes at the opera, or take seaside lodgings for the children after the measles; he is no “grand utility” to cheapen china and hire a wet-nurse; he is simply a man who, having qualities to secure a great career in life, is too self-indulgent and too indolent to exercise them, except for amusement, and who consents to merge certain things that are not very palatable to him in his pursuit of an existence which shall afford him many of the enjoyments that wealth provides, and one thing which he values still more—a splendid arena for his personal display. There is no saying what thousands of promising men—men with the seeds of great things in them—have fallen from virtue through the fascination of a society in which they shone! How is that fellow of “infinite humour,” he who sets the table in a roar, to forego the ecstasy of his triumph and go up to his room and work! Do you expect that the wit who enlivened your dull dinner, or the graceful narrator who charmed your company, leaves you at midnight to sit down to Term Reports or Crown cases reserved? But for him what would have been your turtle and your truffles, your blackcock and your burgundy? You know in your heart that your guests would have growled away over their dreary dinner in a spirit that almost anticipated indigestion, and yet for him you have no milder name, at least when you talk of your neighbour’s adjunct, than Tuft-hunter!

Has it never occurred to you that, if you were the poor man and he the rich one, it is ten thousand to one if you ever met or dined at the same table? Has it ever struck you that all the gold plate on your sideboard never shone with the brilliancy of his wit, or that, even in the blundering way you told it, his smallest jest has made you a "success" for the week after you learned it? Have you never found out that you yourself derived from his presence a *verve* and a geniality that Maraschino or Curaçoa couldn't give you? and do you not know in your heart why your house is called pleasant and your dinners delightful?

In the lavish exuberance of his great resources, he goes on giving you day by day what might make him great, rich, honoured, and courted! You may imagine you are his entertainer, while you have supplied nothing but the grossest part of the feast. What you have really given him is the arena whereon to display his strength and exercise his activity, and for this he is grateful to you, for he likes the pastime even better than you do.

You are the host, but *he* is the entertainer of your company. It is you who feed, but it is he who charms, delights, and transports them. The "Patrons" know it, they feel it, they recognize in themselves stores of appreciation they never knew of before; and, after an hour or two of Olympian enjoyment, they jog homeward trying to recall his witty rejoinders and his "apropos," and to make themselves illustrious in some remote sphere where he has never been heard of.

We are constantly told that the great business of

the State is not carried on by mighty ministers and right honourable secretaries, but by a number of rather saturnine-looking men, of expressions compounded of sternness and submission, who may be met crossing the Green Park every morning at eleven and seen coming back by six or seven o'clock. These, we are told, are the wheel-horses who do all the work, leaving the leaders to show the way and display their grand action. Now, I am certain that the great pleasure of nearly every house in the dinner-giving world depends on men whose names figure on no door-plates, who are not assessed to large figures in the municipal rates, and who might be traced at a late hour of night to very small habitations about St. James's Street.

Think what dismay there would be in Downing Street if all the heads of departments struck work and held out for some exorbitant conditions of one sort or another. There would be a dire confusion, there is no doubt; for though some of the minor priests might be able to say mass as well as the dignitaries, the ministers and right honourable secretaries accustomed to Mr. T and Mr. R. wouldn't believe it, and the public business would stand still. And now fancy what would become of a London season if the whole tuft-hunting profession were to declare with one voice, "We'll not amuse you any more. Never a story, never a *mot*, so much as a pun, shall you have at any price. We are an ill-used class; and until you come to recognize our true claims, and show yourselves disposed to accord us what we feel to be our right, we shall stand out to the last. You imagine you can coerce us by denying us your venison

and grouse; some of us have tried mutton, and actually liked it. We hear daily of different sorts of food that will support life, so don't imagine that we are to be starved into compliance."

There must be something intensely natural in the human parasite, or we should not see him as we do, in every rank and class and condition of society. Like the "*pallida Mors*" of the satirist, they knock alike at the palace and the cottage. They solace the ennui of the bishop, they amuse the retirement of the beadle. Indeed, so far as my own experience goes, I think I have never seen anything so near perfection as the episcopal parasite. Not taking vegetable life as the type of his vocation—like some inferior artists, who are content to wind themselves like ivy around their patron oak—these men seek their inspirations in the animal kingdom, and act as the jackal to the lion.

How I recall one of these going forth to hunt out the prey for his master, beating every cover, scouring every thicket, well knowing the sort of game he can bring down; and even in some cases—like certain courtiers we have heard of—hamstringing the deer that he may be more easily shot; and how I see again before me the episcopal sportsman with his gun at full cock, and ready for the signal to fire. And what showers of applause have followed the explosion. "What wit, what readiness!" exclaim they; "never at a loss! You heard what his Grace said to ——." At such displays as these—I have assisted at more than one of them—it is the jackal I have admired far more than the lion; the restless activity to scent out the game, converted, the instant after discovery, into

perfect indifference. To see him you would say he was a chance passer, a careless spectator, who had happened to come that way. To insure a high success, he must cut off all complicity with his chief. Having given the cue as the prompter, he must hasten before the foot-lights and appear as public. These are high gifts, let me tell you. No wonder that the men who possess them become archdeacons.

Kings have their courtiers—great lords their followers; but no men are so admirably served by their parasites as the bishops. They take to their calling, too, with such a zest, such a hearty will. Their admiration for his Grace has a false air of piety about it—it is so suave, so deferential, so full of homage.

What sorry practitioners lords-in-waiting and equeries look after these men! what inferior talents do they bring to their calling!

More than once in a glorious reverie have I caught myself imagining I was a bishop, and had a chaplain in waiting to stimulate me, to note, and to record and circulate my drolleries.

Were it only for the sake of these men, I am sorry when I hear a sneer against parasites. Let us remember that but for the drooping branches of the acanthus, itself a parasite, we should never have had the tasteful beauty of the Corinthian capital; and let us bear in mind what a comfort the oak must be to the ivy, and that if the tree be a true monarch of the woods, there will be a height where the creeper has never soared to, nor can ever come.

## A NEW CAREER.

It is a very hopeful consideration, that as the world moves on, the march of discovery is always opening some new sphere for the employment of human skill and human intelligence, so that occupations which at first only engaged the attention of a few individuals, as it were specially fitted for the task, become by degrees fashioned into regular professions—careers as distinctively marked as any of the recognized walks by which men stamp their social station. Photography, the telegraph, the various forms of manufacture of gutta-percha, are instances of what I mean, whose followers are numbered by tens of thousands.

It is very pleasant to reflect on this. It is gratifying to think that with the spread of knowledge there is a spread of the means of supporting life : nor is it less agreeable to find that what were regarded as the luxuries of the rich but a few years back, have now become the adjuncts of even humble fortune. Nothing more decidedly evidences the march of civilization than the number of a man's wants. Simplicity is savagery ; this we may rely on ; and I was much struck the other day by the force of this fact, as I saw an Italian shepherd with a red umbrella and blue spectacles tending his

sheep on the slope of the Apennines. How unlike, if you will, the picturesque Melibœus; but how far less exposed to rheumatism than Tityrus, as he lay on the wet grass under his beech-tree!

I am old enough to remember the anxious discussion there used to be about overstocked professions and careers crammed to excess. I can recall a time when people spoke of thatching their barns with unemployed barristers, and making corduroy roads with idle curates. We hear very little about these things now. Grumbles there are about under pay occasionally; but it is rare to hear a man say there are too many doctors or too many attorneys. Novel-writing, indeed, is perhaps the only career actually overstocked: but the fiction-writers have their uses, too: they have banished from society in a great degree the colloquial novelist—the most intense bore in creation—so that we should be grateful to them, as we are to the dogs in Constantinople: there are no other scavengers, and but for them the streets would be impassable.

I like, then, to think that if I were beginning life again I should have a wider field for my choice of a career, and that there are now a number of pleasant pasturages which, in the time of my boyhood, were dried up and unprofitable wastes. I like to feel that a number of men who, like myself, never felt a vocation for regular labour, need no longer be a burden on their richer relatives, and that while the great highways of the world are as wide as ever, there are scores of by-paths, and even some little short cuts, to Fortune, well suited to those who are not hard walkers, or over-well prepared for the road. The capable men will always take care of themselves. For your clever fellow I have

no more sympathy than I have a sense of charity for the rich man. Neither needs what I should give him ; all my interest, all my anxiety, is for those hopeless creatures who can do nothing. Stupid as boys, stupider as men, they grow up to be the reproach of their friends for not having “done something for them.” How few families without one of these shooting-jacketed, cigar-smoking, dreary nonentities, who gazes at his own image in *Punch*, and thinks it the caricature of his friend—fellows with no other aptitudes than for eating, and with a settled melancholy of disposition that seems to protest against the wrongs the world is doing them.

It is for these incurables I want an asylum. Hitherto we have been satisfied to send them to our colonies ; we have shipped them to New Zealand, Australia, Vancouver Island—wherever there was talk of gold to be grubbed we have despatched them : not hopefully, indeed, far from it ; but with that craving for momentary relief that makes a man glad to renew his bill without distressing himself at the instant how he is to meet it eventually ; and, like the bill, these fellows come back to us with a heavier debt to pay—their manners a little coarser, their hands a little harder, more given to brandy, and less burthened with scruples. Sydney or Auckland or Brisbane, or wherever it was, was a humbug—no place for a gentleman : the settlers were all scoundrels. Life was a general robbery there, and throat-cutting and garotting were popular pastimes. What scores of such stories have I heard from these green-eyed, yellow-faced, long-necked creatures, to whom emergency had never suggested manhood, nor any necessity called forth a single quality of energy or independence !



Bad as they were before, they are far worse now. They have veneered their indolence with the coarse habits of a lawless, undisciplined existence, and they bring back to "the family" their slothful self-indulgence, garnished with the graceful amenities of life "in the bush." What are we to do with them? It would be absurd to think of educating them for a learned profession, and many of them are above a trade. You pester your friends in power to get them something. You peril your soul's safety in all the lies you tell of them—of their rectitude and good conduct, and such-like. You apologize for their educational deficiencies on pleas of bad health or accident, and profess a heart-felt belief in their capacity to be policemen, tidewaiters, vice-consuls, or tax-gatherers. You know in your heart what a mine you are charging, but you meanly hope that you may not be there on the day of the explosion. But I will not go on. I need not dwell on what is in the experience of almost every one. These creatures belong to our age just as much as the cholera. All times have probably had them in one form or another, but we see them as a class, and we recognize them by traits as marked as any that stamp a career in life. What will you do with them? I ask. Are you content to see them settled on the country as a sort of human national debt, and to call on others to support the charge? or do you desire to regard them as something eminently conservative—some remnant of ancestral wisdom that it would be an act of desecration to destroy?

Certainly such are not my sentiments. If there be nothing for which these people are fitted, I say then, let them do something for which they are not fitted. The spectacle of idle incapacity is as offensive to an active

and industrious nation as the public exposure of any hideous disease.

Now, it is not always easy to hit upon a remunerative career which shall neither require education nor abilities, neither skill, capacity, nor even industry; and such is our present desideratum. We want an employment suitable for a gentleman—all these creatures I speak of are so-called gentlemen—which shall not demand anything above the first rudiments of knowledge; which shall neither exact early rising nor late retiring; which can be fulfilled in an easy morning hour, or, if left undone, will entail no evil results; and, above all, which shall be well paid. I ask proudly, is it not a triumph to our age that such a career exists, and that hundreds, I might say thousands, are now deriving from it means of ease and enjoyment, who, but for it, would have been in hopeless indigence and want?

In this age, too, of pestilent examination and inquiry, in which the humblest examination must be approached through a fellowship course, what a blessing to think there is a career that asks no test for which there is neither fitness nor unfitness, and whose followers stand on an equality that even angels might envy!

You are impatient to know what I allude to, and I will not torture your eagerness. If, then, there be of your family one too ignorant for a profession, too indolent for commerce, too old for the army or navy, hopelessly incapable of every effort for himself, and dreadfully disposed to lie down on others, with a vague idea that he has a vested right to smoke, lie a-bed, wear lackered boots, and have his hair dressed daily by a barber—if, I say, it be your privilege to include a creature of this order in the family census-return, make

him a Director. Director of what? you ask. Director of a company—a joint-stock company with a capital of two millions sterling, paid up—whatever you like. It shall be Zinc, Slates, Sardinian cotton bonds, a Discount bank at Timbuctoo, or Refrigerators for Lancaster Sound. It shall have its offices in Cannon Street, and a great City Capitalist its banker. Two guineas a-day—five when the Board meets—cab-hire, luncheon, the morning papers, a roaring fire, and a rather jocular style of conversation over the shareholders and their aspirations, are the rewards of office. Can you picture to your mind an easier existence than this? Time was that every indolent man wished to be a bishop; but a bishop is not what he used to be. A bishop is now badgered and baited by all around him. His dean inclines to painted glass, and the archdeacon would shy a stone at it; and there is a thin-faced vicar who writes weekly for advice and guidance, and has grave doubts about the interpretation of a passage in Joshua. I tell you the bishop has other trials as well as Mrs. Proudy. But the Director—the Director before whom the green door with the oval pane sways noiselessly, while the gorgeous porter, whose very gold lace hints a dividend, bows obsequiously as he throws wide another portal—is indeed a great man.

To stand back to the fire, and talk thousands and tens of thousands; to glance over the balance-sheet, and sign your name after six or seven figures in a row, as though your autograph had some virtue in it; to listen to that slang of the share markets that has a clink of money in its jingle, and hear of gigantic “Operations” with overwhelming profits; and then sit down to your basin of turtle and fried fin, with a pint of madeira, are

not mere material enjoyments, but soar to the height of noble emotions, in which the individual feels himself an honour to humanity and a benefactor to his species.

To employ the simple language of a report now before me, I would say "the institution now supports above eight thousand persons, who, but for its timely succour, would be not only in a state of utter pauperism and destitution, but from their previous habits and well-known tendencies positively perilous to peaceful citizens. Besides those permanently on the books of the society are a large number who have received occasional aid, and who may be said to have been rescued by the institution from the paths of vice and debasement."

To this touching appeal, which I have copied almost literally from the advertisement of another Magdalen, I will not add one word; but I fervently hope we shall hear no more of **Destitution**, now that we have got **Direction**.

## THE ENGLISH INQUISITION.

“MY LORD,” said an eminent Irish counsel, some forty-odd years ago, “if there be any principle embalmed in the glorious constitution of this realm—if there is any right which we claim distinctively as British—it is contained in those noble words, the strongholds against tyranny, the refuge against oppression, ‘*Nemo me impune lacessit*’—No man is bound to criminate himself.”

Now, whether the distinguished authority was perfectly correct in his translation, is not the question I desire to raise here. I simply desire to ask if the great privilege of which we are told we should be so proud avail us much, or indeed avail us anything at all, in presence of the system of cross-examination that is now practised in our law-courts.

Much has been said and written about the license of the Press—and unquestionably there is a certain tyranny in the expression of opinion so haughtily delivered, so severely conveyed, as we occasionally see it—but what is the most slashing leader, what the most cutting review, to that *mauvais quart d'heure* a man passes in the witness-box when the examining counsel desires to disparage his veracity?

You are sued in some trifling action. It is a question of some garden-seeds or a hearth-rug, the payment for which, for reasons of your own, you dispute. You believe your case a good one; and though the defence may prove more costly than a submission to the demand, your sense of self-respect requires resistance, and you make it.

Now, I am willing to believe that from your earliest years you have been trained to habits of virtue and order; that, good as a child, you grew better as a youth, and became best as a man; that, so circumspect had you been over your conduct through life, it would be next to impossible to find an instance in which your behaviour could have been altered for the better;—in a word, that you have ever shown yourself equally zealous in the pursuit of virtue as strong in resisting every access of temptation. Get up now into the witness-box, and see what that eminent counsel will make you. Sit under him for five-and-forty minutes, and tell me if five-and-twenty years will erase the memory of the misery you endured, the insinuations you could not reply to, the insults you were not permitted to resent?

In the first place, you are presented to the world of a crowded court as a species of human target, a mark which Serjeant Buzfuz is to fire at as long as he likes, with his own ammunition, and at his own range. He may be as obtuse, as stupid, as wrong-headed, and as blundering as the crier of the court; he may mistake his facts, misstate his brief: but there is one thing he will never forget—that you are there for his own especial torture of you, and that, whether he worried you “for plaintiff” or “defendant,” out of that box

you don't come till he has blackened your character and defamed your reputation, and sent you back to your home outraged, injured, and insulted.

Is there a bishop, arch or simple, on the bench, who in his school-days, or his college-days, or in his after life as tutor, either by word or deed, by something he uttered, something he wrote, some advice he gave, or some advice he did not give, has not in some shape or other done "that thing he ought not to have done," or left undone that which he ought? Is it not very possible that this same error, of whatever kind it may have been, has acted upon his nature either as warning or corrective? Is it not likely that much of his conduct through life has been traced with reference to experiences, bought dearly, perhaps, and that he has shaped his course with the knowledge of these shoals and quicksands which once had threatened him with shipwreck? I take it there must be men amongst us who have learned something from their own errors, and whose example is not the less striking that their manhood is in strong contrast with their youth. I take it that the number of those who could say, I have nothing to secrete, nothing to recant, nothing to unsay, nothing to undo, must be small; and I am strongly disposed to believe that the influence of the very best men would be seriously prejudiced if a perpetual reference were to be made to some circumstances or opinions, or some accidents of their early lives.

Cross-examination rejects all this reserve, and revels in whatever shall display the man in the witness-box as something totally unlike the character he now wears before the world.

Once ingeniously place him in contrast with himself, and he is stamped as a hypocrite; and there is not a man on the jury who will listen to him with any respect.

"I will now ask the witness, my Lord, if the Poem which I hold in my hand, and from which I purpose to read some extracts, was not written by himself. Take that book, sir, and say are these lines yours?"

"My Lord, when I wrote that——"

"Answer my question, sir. Are you the author of this production?"

"My Lord, I humbly entreat your Lordship's protection, and I desire to know if I am bound to answer this question?"

The Court blandly, almost compassionately, assures him that if he deems any admissions he may make will have the effect of incriminating him, he is not bound to reply; on which the examining counsel, with the leer triumphant towards the jury-box, rejoins, "I will now repeat my question, and the witness will use the discretion which his Lordship informs him is his privilege."

"I was a youth of nineteen, my Lord, when I wrote those verses!" stammers out the confused and almost overwhelmed witness, turning with a human instinct to the one living creature that seems to look pitifully on his sufferings.

"Address yourself to me, sir," shouts out Buzfuz, "and tell me if it was at this same irresponsible period of your life you made the acquaintance of Matilda Gubbins?"

"She was children's governess in my uncle's



family," stammers out the blushing martyr, who has a wife and mother-in-law in court, and whose present miseries pale before the thought of another inquisition that awaits him.

"Gentlemen of the jury," cries Buzfuz, in a voice like that of an avenging angel, "I call upon you to take note of the reply the witness has just returned to my question—a reply of which I hesitate to marvel more at its evasion than at its outrageous effrontery. Instead of a simple yes or no to my question, he tells you that his unhappy victim was in a humble position—a poor, perhaps friendless girl."

"Really, brother Buzfuz," interposes the judge, "I must stop this line of cross-examination. It is totally irrelevant to the matter before us."

"My Lord, it is essential to my case to show that this man is not worthy of credit. He comes here to-day to resist the just demand of a poor and industrious tradesman, and on the faith of his own words to deny the contract that subsisted between them; but before he leaves that box the jury shall see what credence they will accord to one whose whole life has been a tissue of treachery, evasion, and falsehood. My instructions, my Lord, extend to the period of his school-days, of which I now purpose to ask him some questions."

It is in vain for the Court to declare that the witness need not reply to this, that, and the other. We all of us know what effect is produced by a man's refusing to answer some home question, the reply to which we ourselves fancy to be the easiest of all imaginable things, so that when the moment has arrived that the counsel can say, "You may go down,

sir ! he says it with a look, voice, and emphasis that seem to consign the unhappy victim to a depth from which he is nevermore to emerge for the remainder of his life.

Now, if these be sore trials to a man, what are they when a woman is the victim ? what are they when the vaguest insinuation swells to the magnitude of an insult, and an imputed possibility becomes a grave outrage ?

We boast about liberty—we rant about our house being our castle—and we repeat the Pittite about that sanctuary where “the rain may enter, and the wind enter, but the King cannot enter ;” and yet we endure a serfdom ten thousand times more degrading than all the perquisitions of a police, and all the searchings of a *gendarmerie*.

While I write, I read that a verdict, with one thousand pounds damages, has been obtained against a well-known journal for having employed in a criticism the same expressions of disparagement the Attorney-General had used in court : the lawyer being, it is alleged, privileged, the critic is held a defamer !

## THRIFT.

I KNOW of nothing so continuously, so pertinaciously overpraised in this world as thrift; nor do I believe that human selfishness ever took on a mask of more consummate hypocrisy than in this same laudation. When I lecture the labouring man on the merits of economy—when I write my little book to show him how life can be maintained on infinitesimal fragments of food, and that homœopathy can apply to diet as well as to physic—my secret motive is often this: to prevent the same man becoming a burden to me, and a charge to the rates, if sickness should overtake or idleness fall upon him. I tell him how he may eke out life on half rations, because the day might come in which he would address himself to me for a meal.

I know there are numbers who do not so act or think, and who really feel for and compassionate the poor; but even they are prone to suggest sacrifices not one of which they would be capable of making, and to instil precepts of self-denial of whose cost they have not the faintest idea.

First of all, thrift is not every man's gift. It is as much an idiosyncrasy as a taste for drawing or an ear for music. There are people in the world whom no

amount of teaching would enable to draw a pig or play a polka. You might hammer at these till doomsday without success. Whatever be the cerebral development that confers the quality, they are deficient in it. To harangue such men as these on economy, is like arguing with a deaf man to induce him to dance in time, or insisting on the blind observing the laws of perspective. The quality that should supply the gift is not there ; like St. Cecilia's angel, *Il n'ont pas de quoi*.

In this universal appeal, therefore, to thriftiness, we are as unjust as if we were to enjoin that all men should be painters, statuary, or poets. There are even races in which the gift is a very rare endowment, and the man who possesses it an exceptional being. The whole Celtic family are deficient in thrift. There is a mingled recklessness and hopefulness—a dash of devil-may-care with self-confidence, that renders them wasteful. They are spendthrift partly out of a certain impulsiveness that drives them to attract notice ; partly out of the general kindliness which loves to disseminate pleasure, and partly because they are intensely sensational ; and next to the luxury of affluence is the struggle with a positive difficulty. The Irishman is a strong instance of what I mean. To attempt to make him provident is to try to make the Ethiopian change his skin. You are, in fact, about to do something that nature never intended—never, in her most fanciful mood, so much as speculated on.

Thrift sits very ill on certain natures. If a man's whole system of life is not penetrated with the motive, his attempt to be thrifty will be a failure—not *im-*possibly something worse than a failure. Let me give an instance from my own experience.

A good many years ago, when I was better off in worldly wealth and in spirits than it is likely I shall ever be again, a great man, who was gracious enough to take an interest in me, tendered me some very excellent advice on the score of my wasteful and extravagant mode of life. He pointed out to me how I kept too many horses, gave too many dinners, played high points at whist, and in general indulged in habits totally unsuited to any but men of large means. He brought the matter so home to me by a reference to himself and his own expenditure—he being, as I have said, a “Personage”—that I could not but feel the application. I pondered over all he said, particularly one point, on which he laid an unusual stress. “Begin your reformation,” said he, “by small economies. You have not an idea how insensibly the desire to extend them will grow on you. Start with something you can do very well without, and you will be astonished to find how many things you now regard as necessities will drop into that category.”

It was not so easy as he said, however, to find that which I could so well dispense with. I liked so many things, and found them all so pleasant! At last I hit upon one; and it is noteworthy that, when a man takes to retrenchment, the first thing he should cut down should be his liberality.

One of my morning pastimes at the time I speak of was to practise pistol-shooting at a gallery in a remote suburb of the city where I lived. It was a pretty spot, with a nice garden, and resorted to by a number of idle amusing fellows, who usually divided their days with a due reference to making them as pleasant as may be. Here we shot, gossiped, betted,

and laughed away the forenoon; and though certainly the pastime might be fairly called a superfluity, I had not the heart to abandon it. My conscience, however, urged me to some measure of reduction; and so, I bethought me, I might begin my retrenchment advantageously by cutting off the daily franc I gave a poor devil who used to hold my pony while I was in the gallery.

I made a rough calculation of the pounds per annum this "extravagance" cost me;—how ready one's mental arithmetic becomes at such a moment! It was a matter of, I think I made it, fourteen pounds a-year I was squandering in this wasteful fashion. I will begin with this to-morrow, thought I. It is a good commencement, and I know of nothing which could less intrench upon my own enjoyments.

When I rode up the next day to the gallery, therefore, I declined the poor fellow's services; and, dismounting, I fastened the bridle of my cob to the hook of the window-shutters, those outside "jalousies" we see in all foreign houses. The poor man's look of dismay, his air of half-reproachful misery, went to my heart; but my great friend had told me to prepare myself for sacrifices. "Your first steps," said he, "will be very painful, now and then they will push you to the very verge of endurance; but must you summon courage to resist, you must go on." And, like one proud of a victory over himself, I stepped boldly on and entered the garden. Was it the consciousness of having done something noble in self-denial that steadied my eye and nerved my hand? Perhaps so. At all events, my first shot struck the very centre, and itself proclaimed the victory by ringing

a bell attached to the back of the target, but so loudly and uproariously that my pony, startled by the uproar, broke away, carrying with him window-frame, "jalousie," and all together, the repairs amounting to a sum of eighty-seven francs in money, and more ridicule than I am able to set down in a "cash valuation."

This was my first, and, shall I own it? my last attempt at economy. There are temperaments which thrift disagrees with, just as there are constitutions which cannot take opium, or digitalis, or a score of other medicaments that others profit by. Mine, I say it in all humility, is one of them. The agent that acts so favourably with others goes wrong with *me*. Something or other has been omitted in my temperament, or something has been mixed up with it that ought not to have been there. I cannot tell which. Whatever it be, it renders me incapable of practising that sage and well-regulated economy by which other men secure themselves against difficulties, and "show a surplus" in their annual balance-sheet.

Just as there are men most eager to become fox-hunters, but who never can sit a fence, or fellows dying to be yachtsmen, but who cannot conquer seasickness, I have a most ardent desire to be thrifty impressed upon me, I own, by that stern condition which is said to be beyond all law. I plot thrift, I dream thrift, I speculate on fifty different ways by which I may reduce the estimates; but, do what I may, it invariably ends in failure. It's always the story of the pony and the window-shutter over again; and so assured have I become, by long and bitter experience, of my incapacity, that whenever I do anything particularly stingy, I have that sensation of

mingled vanity and nervousness that so often is felt as the prelude to an outburst of reckless extravagance. I feel myself a spendthrift, and I almost revel in the sense of a thoughtless munificence.

The most striking feature about excessive thrift is its uselessness. Morning does not follow night by a more certain law than does extravagance succeed saving. Pass your whole life in laying up farthings or saving candle-ends, and your son or your nephew, or whoever it be inherits from you, will take care to waste in a week what cost you years to accumulate. Every lesson of your life will be read by him backwards, and all that your dreary existence will have taught him will be warnings against your philosophy.

This thrift tendency would be comparatively harmless if the individual practising it were satisfied with the approval of his own conscience, and the not less pleasant consequences of his increasing store; but this is what he is not—nor can he be. He insists on going about the world recounting all the little shabby and miserable expedients by which he saves money, and telling all the petty shifts he is put to to preserve existence; and in this way he poisons the life of other men who, poorer than himself, are driven to regard themselves as reckless spendthrifts. My pint of sherry becomes a shameless extravagance the moment I bethink me of my neighbour, who could buy me, and all belonging to me, off the face of the earth, sitting down to his table-beer, and saying that he cannot afford better. I may inveigh against his meanness, call him by every hard name I can remember, invest him with every bad quality I can think of, but the victory is his, and my dry Amontillado will have got a bitter that



never belonged to the vintage, and Cleopatra and her pearl will occur to me every time that I touch the decanter.

Now I deny his right to do this. Let him muddy his own well if he likes, but let him not come and throw stones into mine.

A life passed in incessant savings and perpetual self-denials seems to me as logical a mistake as though a man should persist throughout his whole existence in training for a match that was never to come off. I see a good deal of privation in this, and I cannot see the profit.

## A PERSONAL-PARLIAMENTARY.

“MESSRS. SHUFFELL & SHIFT present their respectful compliments to Mr. O'Dowd, and beg to learn if he be disposed—as some time since he informed them he was—to offer himself for a seat in Parliament. S. & S. have now several borough and two county representations on their list, and are hopeful that neither the pecuniary considerations nor the political obligations will be found any obstacle to Mr. O'Dowd's most natural ambition. An early reply is requested, as a large number of applicants is already in the field.”

I received this despatch as I was looking over my fishing tackle, thinking of hooking something very different from an Under-Secretaryship, or even the berth of Assistant-Commissioner to somebody's commission. I replied at once, intimating that I had a wide conscience and a narrow purse; that my breast was charged with noble aspirations, but I was afraid I had overdrawn my banker. If, then, Messrs. S. & S. could hit upon a pure-minded constituency desirous to distinguish themselves in a corrupt age by single-mindedness and devotion, and eager to send into the House a man as unshackled by pledges as he was un-

stained by bribery, to let me have their address, and they should have mine.

To this came these words, marked "Private"—

"DEAR O'DOWD,—No bosh. Can you come down with fifteen hundred ready? Ballot, manhood suffrage, no Church, no entail, no anything after ten years.—Yours ever, MALACHI SHUFFELL."

My reply was—"Money tight, convictions easy, hopes looking up;" and on this we arranged a meeting at Brussels.

Punctual to his appointment, Shuffell arrived an hour after myself. He had but a day to give me, but a day is a long space when two men understand each other, and thoroughly take in, each the intentions of the other. He had brought four specimen boroughs for my inspection. They were the only things going cheap at the moment, for, as he said, "There's a great run on the House now. They all want to get in."

Nothing could be more succinct or businesslike than his list. There was first the name of the place, in another column the number of the electors, in a third "available voters," in a fourth general hints for canvass; as thus—"Swampleigh, with 682. The Baptist section, and Hoddes the saddler, Maccles of the Fox and Goose, and Tom Groves of the Post-office. Hints—Reduced taxation, overthrow of the Irish Church, subsidy to Congregational religionists, no Sunday traffic, no beerhouses, a general nothingness, and great economy."

"Not the thing for you, Mr. O'D.," said he; "there is no expansiveness here—nothing for the man

who 'glories in the name of Briton.' This is better—Comberton, voters 1004; 460 available by various arguments. Of this borough there are annually from forty to fifty drafted into the public service. They like the revenue, and many are gaugers. They are convivial, Radical, and religious, but above all bigotry in each, and are really devoted to providing for their families, and have always upheld the reputation of the town.'

"This is next: Inshakerrigan—Tenant-right, Free passage to America, no spirit duties, no Established Church, no county rates, the poor on the Consolidated Fund."

The last was a Welsh borough, Mnddlmwcrllm; but as the candidate would be called on to pronounce the name, I gave it up at once.

"Is there nothing Conservative?" asked I, for I had several notes in my desk against growing Radicalism, the wisdom of our ancestors, and time-honoured institutions.

After a brief pause, he replied: "Yes, there is Ditchley-le-Moors; but it's costly—very costly: we always keep it for one of the speechless younger sons of a great house.

"You must canvass Ditchley," said he, "in an earl's carriage, and send your orders to the tradespeople by one of the noble lord's flunkies. They have always had that respect paid them, and they like it. Do you happen to know a lord who could spare you his equipage for a week or ten days?"

I shook my head.

"Let us not think of Ditchley," continued he; "beside, you'd find it immensely hard to speak on that

side. They all want England to be great, powerful, and Protestant, but with increased armaments and diminished expenditure. 'Bully Europe, and cut down the Income-tax!' is the cry. The Church, too, is to be upheld in all its strength, uniformity insisted on, and the right of private judgment maintained—a difficulty in its way; and in the distance a Reform Bill, opening the franchise to every man with a pair of black trousers. Can you do this?'

"Scarcely."

"I thought not. There is no such easy tune on the political fiddle as the Radical jig, 'Down with all o' them.' 'Am I to tell the vast and intelligent assembly I see before me this evening—an assembly that represents the skill, the ability, the industry, ay, and the integrity of this great nation—that they are deemed too ignorant, too uneducated, too irresponsible, and too dangerous, to be entrusted with civil rights? Is it because by the daily exercise of those qualities which have made England the workshop of the world, that you are to be excluded from any share in the Government whose enactments no men are more vitally interested in than yourselves?'

"There's the key-note—go on now."

I arose, threw back my coat from my chest, and continued: "It is by labour that life is dignified, and which of us is not proud to be a labourer? If the indolent aristocrat who refuses to let us share in the rewards and prizes of the State were but to look back, he would find that his own rights to the very pre-eminence he asserts were founded on labour, and that the coronet on his brow was picked up in the mill or the factory, the counting-house or the law court. He

would learn that toil, which disciplines the heart, elevates the man, and that production is to humanity what creation is to nature."

"No, no; that won't do. None of that. Keep to the labourer—you were good there."

"You are perhaps too narrow-minded for the exercise of the franchise! I wish the men who say this would come down with me to your Mechanics' Institute. I wish they would enter into discussion with some of those intelligent men I met there not more than an hour since. I should like to see their effeminate intellects brought face to face with those great male organizations."

"That's bad; male is Frenchified; say manly."

"You mustn't interrupt," said I; "how the devil am I to keep up the steam if you're always 'banking' my fire? I would like, I say, to see these club-nurtured creatures of self-indulgence and indolence confronted for once with the stupendous vigour of our manufacturing population, and compel them to argue out the great question between them in their proper persons. How do we legislate for the working man? I ask; is it with reference to himself, to his wants, his habits, his hopes, or his instincts? or is it simply by a respect for the convenience, the security, and the wealth of him who employs him? If we change an order in the Court of Bankruptcy, we send out a commission to supply us with information, to search out every detail and particle that may serve to guide us in our judgment, and especially we are concerned to know that no servant of the State should be damaged in his fortune without being duly indemnified; but how do we deal with *you*? We decree the hours you shall

labour and the hours you shall rest; we settle the periods of your toil as though they were the enactments of a penal code; and when the day of repose arrives, we arrest your pleasures, we close to you the few sources of recreation moderate means could compass; we forbid the little excursions that health almost necessitates; and we tell you to sit down and brood over the evil destiny that has made you Englishmen and mechanics!

"Do they like Latin?"

"No; Latin is not quoted in a borough; it will do in the counties and the metropolitan seats, where men cheer it that they may seem to understand it."

"It's a pity; there's nothing rounds off a speech like something with *hominum* in it."

"Keep it for the House; it's always good there?"

"And do you really think I shall get there?"

"Your return is certain.—Let us order dinner."

"Wait a moment," said I, "what about a petition? They sometimes try to smash one's election that way."

"A petition," said he, with a sort of contemptuous irritation in his tone, "never succeeds, but against a fellow with some small mean scruple,—some one who hesitates, some one who won't go in at once and say, Here I am, ready to swear: what shall it be? Bribe? never bribed. Treated? never treated. Promise? never promised. I stand here perfectly unassailable on the score of all corrupt influence, my first and last declaration to the electors being, 'Gentlemen, if you really desire an independent representative—if you are satisfied to send into Parliament a man unpledged and unfettered, and who is no more capable of endeavouring to exert an unfair influence over you

than he is of submitting to a similar bondage to himself, I shall be proud to serve you ; but if the price of my seat were to be one shilling disbursed in corruption, I would refuse it.' ”

“ Will a committee believe all this ? ”

“ Not a word of it, but they'll have to swallow it all the same. Nobody can contradict me but myself ; let them try and make me, that's all.”

“ I'm ready for dinner now,” said I, “ and with a capital appetite.”



## GLIMPSES OF BLISS.

I REMEMBER, when a boy, to have seen a man who passed his days wandering from one book-stall to another, stopping a while to read at each, and in this way gratifying that taste for letters his humble fortune had denied him the power of more legitimately enjoying.

He must have had some small pittance to live on, for he never seemed to do anything for his support. His dress and belongings bespoke him as very poor, and there was a degree of humility in his manner that still more indicated narrow fortune. Thus, for instance, he never would presume to occupy the place of a possible purchaser, but would move respectfully away when such approached. In the same way was he cautious not to touch any volume in request, contenting himself for the most part with some old vellum-bound chronicle, some musty-looking record; and even these would he hastily surrender if a chance glance was turned towards them;—all such attentions declaring as plain as words themselves—“I am a mere interloper. I am here by no right. It is this good man’s courtesy to let me run my eye over these

pages." Though he never was known to buy, the stall-keepers bore him no ill-will; he was far too meek, too modest for that; and some actually liked to see him standing there, offering, as it were, his homage to those stores of wisdom they possessed, and thus testifying to the busy world that swept past, what a rich mine of knowledge lay there beside them, had they but the skill and the energy to work it.

At times too, rare indeed, he would venture on a word of remark—a sentence, perhaps, of praise of the volume he had just laid down, sufficient to attract the attention of a buyer; and these little criticisms having been known to do good service, the dealers bore grateful memory of them.

He was an object of much interest to me. I used to watch him as he read, and hasten to take up the book he had quitted, curious to see whether one class of reading had its principal attraction for him, and what that class might be. No clue could I find to his nature through his studies. Now he would pore for hours over a volume of Marco Polo—now over a play of Ben Jonson's. I have seen him, on the same day, reading Dugald Stewart, "Paul and Virginia," "Hopner's Equations," and "Bossuet's Sermons,"—nothing in his manner showing which interested him the most. The branch of the "Trade" who deal under atmospheric pressure is probably not remarkable for learning; and it was not unfrequent, when a book was offered there for purchase, to see a reference made to this stranger, who in a moment pronounced on the edition, and whether it had or had not been superseded by another—what its merits, what its defects. Very cunning was he in Elzevirs and Aldines, and had a rare

taste in the margins and capital letters of the old Italian printers.

Over and over used I to speculate as to how he came by this knowledge, and wonderingly ask myself if it were a source of happiness to him. Again, I questioned, would all this greedy pursuit of learning I saw in him survive if he were suddenly to become rich and affluent, the owner of a well-stocked library, abounding in every appliance of ease and comfort? Would he hang as enraptured over that volume in the deep recess of a cushioned chair, as I have seen him when the rain beat against his face and the rude wind almost sweep him and his treasure away? Would all the leisurely indulgence of literature equal in ecstasy those moments snatched hurriedly in this dark alley, or down that narrow lane? Perhaps not. The battle is not to the strong, nor the race to the swift, any more in worldly happiness than in other things. The heart to enjoy is the great requisite; the objects to be enjoyed come only second; and there is a something in those pleasures won by a sacrifice which have a sweetness all their own,—just as the guinea of a man's own earning has its especial value. Doubtless, then, this poor Eugene Aram had many a bright moment even as he stood cold and shivering there, nor knew the pang of sorrow till he came to part with what had charmed and entranced him.

No doubt, too, he often wandered away in thought to day-dreams of what delight it would be to be the owner of these treasures—to taste of them at will, having their society at all times to cheer, enliven, comfort, and console him. Nor is it impossible that his fancy gave to such a picture a colouring no reality could vie with,

for there are few of us who cannot so cheat our own natures, and make the possible far more glowing than the actual.

What reminded me of this poor fellow was seeing what I may call his counterpart in society—one who, like him, was too poor to buy, yet longed to possess, and was thus forced to steal passing fitful glances of what he dare not linger over.

“Poor George! we are all very fond of him; but of course the girls never think of him.” “He’s too poor to marry,” says mamma, who, like the benevolent stall-keeper, gives him leave to beguile his hour or so with what he must never possess. And how like is the Eugene Aram of Love to the Eugene Aram of Letters! The same deep devotion, the same fidelity, the same indifference to all other pursuits, the same humility in each. Even to that terrible test, the power of surrendering to another what they are not rich enough to secure for themselves, are they identical.

What scores of these do we find in the world, and how touching are they in their deep humility! Turning over the pages, as it were, looking wistfully into the volume, reading a line here, catching a passage there, and going away with some stray bit locked up in their hearts to ponder over, to dream over, to shed tears over—who knows? Look at the poor fellow when some transient word of kindness has fallen upon him, and say, have you ever seen a human thing so full of happiness? Watch him as he falls back, dropping the book a real purchaser would bid for—watch him as he steals away to hide his shame and his sorrow in another room, and tell me, have you ever seen more misery than his?

“It is only George!” as mamma says in a sort of explanatory way to the party who comes to buy, and must needs ask, “Who is that fellow with the light whiskers?” “It is only George So-and-so.” “Only!” Oh, the ineffable misery of that “only”—the cruelty that declares him to be of that category which are not even catalogued—creatures that nobody wants, nobody asks for.

Mammas are occasionally more severe than the stall folk; they will not even let him have the passing enjoyment of the few moments he would snatch from sorrow. They have no compassion for his indolence, nor any pity for his self-indulgence. What business has he with these fair pages, so white, so smooth, so hot-pressed! They are scarcely conciliated by all his humility, deep though it be. “He oughtn’t to be there at all. It is not delicate of him; he knows perfectly well that he hasn’t sixpence; he ought to feel”—I don’t know what; but he ought certainly to see that seeing and hearing, when the sight is beauty and the sound is of sweet voices, are luxuries little suited to him who has nothing, and he should go his way, close his eyes, and walk in darkness.

Think of him when he comes back some morning, to hear that the book was sold. He was already in the third volume—deep, deep in the story. He had dreamed of it all night; and now another has carried it off, and he shall never hear more of it. Ay, these things come of reading at the stalls—looking over what one can’t buy, and ought not even to glance at.

I wonder if he who carries off the prize ever bestows a thought on the poor creature whose reading he has so ruthlessly cut short. Is he sorry for him?

Perhaps not—perhaps he never heard of him. Perhaps he merely saw him as he stood at the stall, and noticed him as he stole meekly, modestly away.

Now and then, I take it, some of these poor scholars rise to greatness, and become men of mark and note; the small spark of genius glowing out till it becomes like a sun, to cover the earth with its light, so that they who read by it see what their unaided sight had never shown them. I wonder—oh, how I wonder!—if then, in the day of triumph and success, they ever enjoyed, with all the appliances of luxury, what they once felt as they stood at the stall, unable to buy, unable to relinquish.

## ANONYMOUS AUTHORSHIP.

WHEN a certain distinguished contemporary of ours experimented on the world of his friends and admirers by the announcement of his death, and thereby provoked a very candid examination into his claims to greatness, he was not, it is said, as much flattered by the experiment as he had hoped to be. Some gifts were altogether denied him, others were conceded with certain little accompanying detractions. Ingenious explanations were given to show why he had not done scores of things he had never dreamed of; and finally, curious speculations were thrown out as to how far certain æsthetical deficiencies in his nature may not have impaired the exercise of his purely intellectual faculties. In fact, the critics presumed to be able, by a *post mortem*, to pronounce upon the man's defects pretty much as the surgeon might on his physical derangements; and as the doctors, on discovering a lesion here, an adhesion there, an ossification of this, or a hypertrophy of that, could unerringly declare why life was shortened, so would these skilful anatomists be able to say how it was that he failed in this or broke down in that—what were those qualities that were wanting to have made him as eminent as certain other gifts indicated he might have been.

In a word, the restraint of all concealment would appear to do for these wonderful critics just as much as the "autopsy" does for the doctor. All is laid open to them. There lies "the subject," and we can trace every fibre of him now. All the little devices by which he deceived, all the subtleties by which he cajoled us, avail him no longer. We see him as he was in life; and as the surgeon is often obliged to own his astonishment by what a frail thread vitality hung so long, so will the biographer be forced to confess that there was wonderfully little strength in all that vigour that once impressed us—only a mere pretence of passion in the pathos that once had all but convulsed us. I am ready to own that I am sorry for this. Mistaking our geese for swans may be an ornithological error, but is not bad philosophy. I am certain that we are disposed to over-cultivate the difficulty of being pleased, and that, on the whole, we would infinitely rather be content than discontented.

At all events, I am determined I will never put my friends to the severe test of animadverting on my character during my life, by any announcement of my death. "*Les absents ont toujours tort*," says a wise adage of that language which is so seldom mistaken in worldly matters; and as Curran tells us, "Death and absence differ but in name."

Indeed, I know I couldn't do it if I would. I could no more submit to the knife of any critic than I could endure the scalpel of the dissector without crying out, "Stop—I am alive!" I admit this is a great weakness on my part, in some measure the result of temperaïment, and partly, too, the consequence of a certain self-indulgent mode of dealing with any diffi-



culty by going out to meet it in preference to averting or waiting to see if it would not pass by. My combativeness enables me to bear the open stand-up fight; what I really fear is, what may take place when I am not forthcoming to defend myself.

For this reason I have never been able to understand how people have courage to go in mask to a ball, and endure all the impertinences to which the disguise exposes them. Surely there is no throwing off one's identity by the mere assumption of a domino: and what terrible stabs to one's self-esteem may be given under the cope of a monk or the cowl of a Capuchin! The next thing to this is to publish anonymously—to give to the world a poem or a novel, and lie perdu while your friends read, ridicule, or revile it—to sit calmly, smilingly by, when some one reads you aloud to a laughing audience, overwhelmed with your absurdity—to be warned against your own book—to be confidentially told, "It's the very worst thing of the season"—to hear little fragments of yourself bandied about as domestic drolleries, and to listen to curious speculations as to how or why the publisher had ever adventured on such a production, and grave questions put if there be really a public for such trash.

It is an awful thing to assist at even this much of one's own autopsy, and to hear all the impertinent things that the very stupidest of your acquaintances can say of you. But there is still worse than this; there is a depth lower than abuse; there is a pang infinitely more painful than all that sarcasm or malevolence can inflict; and this is, the being obliged to listen, patiently, while some addle-headed imbecile relates the argument or the story of your book; mistaking the

characters, misplacing the events, totally inverting your moral, and exhibiting you, in the very moment of his commendation, as a creature so cruelly akin to himself that you might be his brother—to be consolingly assured that though the tenor of the book be slow, and the author unquestionably a dull man, there are now and then little gleams of intelligence in him, and little signs of would-be smartness. Then come the guesses, whether you may not be Mr. Spurgeon, Martin Somebody, or perhaps a female writer.

It is twenty-one years, compassionate reader, since I underwent all this, and the suffering is as fresh as if it was yesterday. I remember the very table where they cut me up—I can recall the chair on which I sat to be lacerated—I can bring to mind the drivelling idiot that had got bits of my unhappy production, as he thought, by heart, and declaimed them, with interpolated balderdash of his own, till my reason actually wandered under the infliction.

I declare it, and declare it advisedly, that though few men are ever killed by severe criticism, numbers drop into an early grave, or, worse again, into drivelling incapacity, from the effects of a mistaken admiration. The people who go about advertising your deformities, praising the hump on your back, your squint, your hare-lip, these are your real destroyers.

The last of my anonymous miseries was the seeing my volume—the work over which I had toiled and laboured, pondered over by day, dreamed of at night, revolved in such shapes that it became part of my very nature, and its characters dearer to me than kith or kin—seeing this held aloft by a book-auctioneer as he said, “What shall we say for this, gentlemen? I have

not read it, but I am told that it once had a considerable vogue ; it is handsomely bound in calf, with gilt edges. Will any gentleman say two shillings—half the cost of the binding ?—Thank you, sir ! At sixpence it is going—gone ! ”

Oh, Fame ! what a terrible *ignis fatuus* you are ; and, dear me ! what cruel “croppers” some of us do meet in pursuit of you !

## SWANLIKE GEESE.

THERE is a strange inconsistency which I recognize in my nature, and which, I have no doubt, many others have experienced in their own, and of which I have never been able to arrive at a satisfactory explanation. How is it, I ask, that while one is never contented with his lot in life, always believing that Fate has ill-treated him, he is, nevertheless, profoundly convinced, that whatever is his is the very best possible thing of its kind that ever was born, hatched, nurtured, fashioned, or formed—that, in fact, his geese are not merely swans, but infinitely prettier than his neighbours' swans—whiter, more stately, and more graceful.

Some will perhaps demur to either or both of my propositions. One may tell me that his well-balanced mind has never known what it was to feel discontent ; and another may say that he has so far pushed his sense of dissatisfaction, that he regards all around him, all that he has and owns, as the worst that ever befell humanity. With such extremes I deal not ; I take humanity *ex medio acervo*, and believe it will be found that the mass is of a temperament like my own.

Now, I am free to own I have no right to be boastful of the possession of a spirit of Christian

resignation or philosophic contentedness. It is not in my nature to see that all things have gone as well as possible with me in life; on the contrary, I have, as I think, a whole rookery of "crows to pluck" with Destiny. I cannot persuade myself that I am not a far finer creature than the world will admit,—braver, bolder, wittier, pleasanter, more genial, more forgiving—more fifty other excellent things, in short—than have ever been scored down in the credit side of my account with humanity. If the conviction has not put me out of temper with my fellow-men, it is in a good measure because I ascribed much of this unfairness to envy, and much to ignorance; but still the conviction is there, and whatever other scepticism may torment or tease me, there is one form of it I have never felt. I have never disbelieved in myself. This will show, therefore, that I am not in that happy category of mortals which assumes to be the pets of Fortune. I have my grudges against the world, and I go on through life with the conviction that I am to carry these grudges to my grave—what to do with them there I know not. Don't mistake me for a moment, and think me one of those dyspeptic wretches who go about deploring their own digestion, and destroying other men's. I make no lamentations over hard fate and cruel usage. I don't prefer a suit against the world, and file my bill against human ingratitude. I am too proud to ask even for my own, but I'll not pretend to say that I concur in the verdict that has robbed, or the decree that has despoiled, me. No. I see in myself an ill-used man, and, what is worse, I am by no means sure the world will ever discover it. With this heavy load on my heart—very heavy at certain times, very hard to

bear in dreary November weather—is it not strange that I can persist in believing that whatever I possess as my own is the best possible thing that ever was produced of its kind? My ox and my ass—I won't say anything about my man-servant and my maid-servant, but my cattle, and even the stranger within my gates—I maintain to be better than my neighbour's cattle and my neighbour's stranger; and I uphold that they have certain qualities, difficult though they be of vulgar appreciation, in which they excel his cattle and his stranger, and beat them clean out of the field.

This belief neither makes me vainglorious nor intolerant. It is true, I cannot explain it. I know of no earthly reason why the scrubby little pony, whose capped hocks and heavy head and low shoulders I descanted on so freely while the butcher owned him, should on his becoming mine, be transformed into a model of equine perfection, no more than I can tell why that patched and blistered little sketch in oils, which I picked up for a crown at an old-furniture shop, should have some touches wonderfully like Mieris, and be unquestionably a good specimen of the Flemish school. All I know is, that my Skye terrier is better bred, my gun carries farther, and my jasmine-tree blossoms earlier and better, and continues longer in bloom, than any other man's, be the same who he may. These are not fancies. They are no delusions. They are things I know and feel to be true. They are palpable parts of my self-consciousness, not a whit the less dear to my heart that an envious world will now and then dispute them. Indeed I accept that same depreciation as a necessary consequence of my superiority.

I am well aware that my neighbour prefers claims

to a real excellence, and thinks his dog is bigger or his peacock finer than mine. I make every allowance for the poor fellow's weakness; he never was an *esprit fort*, and that last fever left "dregs" behind it. If his delusion give him any pleasure, in heaven's name let him have it. Enough for me that I know better.

To bring this crop of convictions to full perfection—to enable them to put forth all their shoots and develop their fruit in due season—one must live in somewhat of estrangement from the world. The ordinary clash and clatter of mankind must be shunned—the rough and tumble of life must be avoided. From coarse-minded men, hard, stern, uncomfortable judgments, that they stupidly call "truths," are continually dropping; and there are creatures ready to give their vulgar opinions at every moment, and tell you scores of things that push your patience to its last entrenchment.

Let one of these fellows into your grounds, and they'll pluck your swan's feathers to such a purpose, that, though they won't persuade you he was a goose, they'll give him a horrible resemblance to one!

They have positively a diabolic dexterity in the practice, and they'll leave the bird in such a plight that you'll never think the same of him again. Of course they'll swear to you that they never touched him. They are ready to make the most solemn affidavit that all they have done is to direct your attention to certain little imperfections, a deficiency here, a redundancy there, that have escaped you. They tell you compassionately, with a sort of commiserative courtesy that is worse than the cold stage of the ague, that you have only to use your eyes to see that the bird is a goose, and not

even a fine specimen of gooserie—that neither its bill nor its breast, its feathers nor its form, are swanlike. The wretches try to reason you out of what, if you surrender, gives all colour to existence—all its sweetness and perfume to life.

Big cities, towns of any kind, are very unfavourable to swanlike geese. The people who live in these places are singularly wilful and cruel, and pluck the quill-feathers out of one's poor bird out of pure malevolence and a love of mischief. Indeed, much intercourse with the world is a sore test to the rearing of these delicate birds. For my own part—I say it not at all boastfully—I can follow the practice under every disadvantage of place, and every test of difficulty. I can come back from the conservatory of Chatsworth and think that the box of mignonette under my window is sweeter in perfume, and more delicate in colour, and fresher in bloom, than all that I saw there. Nor is this a delusion.

What do you or I see in that starved cur, with misshapen head and deformed body, that skulks after the ill-favoured man in the fustian jacket? Is he to us anything but an ill-bred mangy mongrel? And yet to his master's eye he has a load of qualities; he is faithful, and fond, and watchful, and forgiving, mindful of all said to him, and well knowing how to accommodate himself to the rubs and attritions of a hard world. Yes, that sorry-looking beast understands and lends himself to the life of him that owns him; and there is a bond between them just as strong—what am I saying?—ten thousand times as strong, as that which ties my lord to his noble staghound. The inordinate value for that which is one's own is especially the gift of the



poor man. First of all, your Cræsus really never attains to the perfect sense of possession, so much is expended in display, ostentation, and exhibition. He who opens his picture-gallery twice a-week is, on those days at least, no more the owner of his Titians than I am. I am not sure if, for the time being, I, in my more intense rapture with the great artist's work, have not a stronger claim to call the canvas mine than he has. There is a coy damsel, by Greuze, over the door in the small drawing-room at Prince Demidoff's splendid villa at San Donato; she is drawing a shawl across her shoulders, and while doing so, and seemingly occupied with the action, she steals a look under her long lashes—and such a look, so bewitchingly tender and shy, so full of sweet enchantment and a sense of drollery, that when you move away from the spot, all the smiles of real, actual, living beauty, seem poor, tame, and soulless in comparison. Now, I not only aver that the Prince who owns this incomparable Hourii, not only never gazed on her with such rapture as I have, but I am ready to declare that she never yet bestowed upon him such a glance of beaming tenderness as she has let fall upon me. The rich Scythian owns her image, but her heart is mine !

These are the things which constitute the wealth of the poor man, and of which no fall in the Funds, no smash in securities, can rob him. It is in the exercise of these gifts of “enjoyability”—*passe moi le mot*—that he not only redresses the balance of his destiny, but that he cultivates that faculty of fruition which makes him feel a positive ecstasy in whatever is his own.

It is not, then, in my ignorance that I declare that

my clove-pink, or my gooseberry wine, or my wheelbarrow, are incomparably the best in Europe. I who say this have seen men and cities. I am much travelled, and in the many-sided ways of men considerably versed. I have seen ducal swans at Blenheim, and imperial swans at Versailles, and I come home to recognize in my own swan—the bird that some envious traducer has called a goose—a creature infinitely more beautiful and more stately.

Mind—it is all-important to mind—that there is no intolerance in all this. I seek not to mould you to my opinion; I want no converts. Fill your heart choke-full, if you like, of convictions of my folly and stupidity. Believe me a fool or a fanatic. I only stipulate that you do not wound me unnecessarily by telling me so. Go your way with the lowest opinion of my intelligence, but leave me my faith—my faith in myself.

The perfect ecstasy of possession is, I repeat, only known to the poor man. To him the cherished object is the rampart against the storm. It is the little nook where he nestles during the tempest; and just as the shipwrecked sailor attaches a fonder love to the plank he clings to than ever captain felt for the proudest three-decker, so is it that poverty invests some humble thing with a higher, dearer, holier interest than affluence ever threw round a priceless possession.

If it were not for this, humble fortune would be a worse thing than it is; but the glorious alchemy of that little pronoun “Mine” can work wonders. Through its magic my little field becomes a boundless prairie, and the scrubby trees that shelter me from the highroad are a grove. As for my swan, though

Mrs. O'Dowd nearly made my blood run cold by something she said about Michaelmas, my swan is the greatest of swans, and might claim descent from one of Jove's own.

And oh, my friends! let none laugh you out of this wise philosophy, nor by a sarcasm rob you of your faith. Delusion! Why, what is all around us but delusion? Is not Court favour a delusion? Is not fame a delusion? Are not the Whigs a delusion? together with cod-liver oil, Mechi's razors, and the Sydenham trousers? Some people even think the French Empire a delusion.

Be not ashamed, therefore, for a sneer, nor affrighted by a sarcasm. Go back and sit down beside your pond; and when your swan sails forth in all his graceful dignity, enjoy your quiet laugh over the creatures that only see him as a goose.

## O'DOWD'S EXPERIENCES

### "EN VOYAGE."—ACT I.

THE ordinary channels of information—as the late Sir Robert Peel, by a neat but unnecessary periphrase, designated the newspapers—have just informed me that “Cornelius O’Dowd passed through Paris” on a certain day “*en route* to his seat on the Lago Maggiore.”

I read the paragraph with a pleased vanity. It seemed, first of all, to imply that the fact had a certain importance and interest for the world at large, who, knowing who Cornelius O’Dowd was, would gladly learn something of his whereabouts; and secondly, there was in the mention of his “seat on the Lago Maggiore” what, to the uninitiated at least, smacked of worldly goods and material guarantees, very captivating to one who is often obliged, as Sheridan phrased it, “to call upon his imagination for his facts.”

The paragraph in question would have left nothing to be desired had it added, “Mr. O’Dowd in crossing the Alps waved his grateful adieux to his friends north of them.—No cards sent.”

I borrow the latter formula from those people who

announce to the public that, having just got married, they are too much engrossed by the honeymoon to select objects for their gratitude, and yet desire to include in one wide swoop all their well-wishers and admirers: and so say I, once more, "No cards sent." Indeed, I know of no amount of pasteboard that could convey even a tithe of my gratitude. What have I not had of flattery, attentions, and civilities—of fine compliments and fish dinners—of dry champagne and dulcet courtesies—of all, in fact, that can gratify, nourish, and captivate! I have attained to that pinnacle to which aldermen and poets alike aspire as the summit of human wishes. I have been flattered and I have been fed.

Some six weeks ago I issued forth from the solitude of my rocks and wild olives to see a little of that great and busy world of whose doings for years I have had only cognizance at second-hand; and second-hand opinions, like second-hand clothes, have the same disadvantage, that they reach one with the gloss off, and no small share, besides, of patching and reparation. It was, therefore, no slight matter to me, humble Hermit of the Encumbered Estates Court, that I could go out and see for myself, charter my own craft, and be my own pilot.

You gentlemen of Piccadilly who lounge in Rotten Row know very little of the overwhelming excitement produced on one who lives the dreary life of Italian do-nothingness, by the mere sights and sounds of that everyday world in which you move; nor can you measure the mingled confusion and enjoyment of him who hears more in half an hour than he had imagined in half a year: and who, just as a man in a balloon

sees in one sweep of his vision more of the earth than in a whole lifetime, gains by one fleeting glance, a wider, broader, more far-stretching view of humanity than ever before he had attained to.

When I started on my "Outing"—as a Cockney would call it—I issued to myself a sort of instruction. I said something like this: Cornelius, you are about to revisit a world which is no longer what it was when you last saw it. Many things has it forgotten—much has it learned since then. Not to weary with enumeration, bear in mind that the telegraph now usurps all prophecy, except for the winner of the Derby, and that men walk with a light their fathers had not, in the matter of Colenso, and the "Call for trumps." Great movements are also in progress. Wise statesmen have discovered that to redress the inequality of worldly wealth it would be well to intrust the least responsible with political power, to rule those above them, and that a man who pays annually six pounds for his domicile has both the capacity and the leisure to be a politician. Bethink you also that in Ireland the discontent with landlordism is such that grave and profound thinkers have thought of transferring the right of property to the tenant, and seeing if, by a nice adjustment of claims, the peasant might not be disposed to accord some moiety of his surplus gains to the assistance of the once-proprietor.

The Senate and the Stage are also not what you remember them. Canning, nor Plunkett, nor the great Kean or Macready, would now be tolerated. The nation has risen above mere sound and cant; they demand the practical, the palpable, the plainly effective, and hence they prefer to hear Cumming in the

pulpit, and Darby Griffith in the House, and would rather have a raw-and-bloody-bones novel of the sensational school than Sir Walter and all his works.

Socially, too, great changes are in operation. The Volunteer movement has gone far to efface class distinctions. The "swell" lies down with the snob; and the influence of this spirit has even extended to the Church, who are beginning to bethink them that even common people have occasionally souls to be saved, and that all ragged folk are not as essentially shut out from heaven as they are denied the franchise. Hence is it that we see bland curates go down among the heathen of the Haymarket, and doctors of divinity drink tea with Delilahs—perilous temptation, that nothing short of piety would confront.

Lastly, I enjoined myself to inquire what progress socialities were making—how about dinners—was the cooking better—was conversation more brilliant—were the talkers wittier—were the *entrées* hotter—was opinion more moderate—expression neater—banter more refined—was there less melted butter—had, as I was taught to believe, positiveness gone out with port, and a more courteous spirit come in with claret—above all, had the influence of woman increased—were the opportunities of its exercise more extended—and were men more cowed by crinolines than their fathers once were by limp petticoats?

Were not these subjects enough for a Special Commission? were not these matters for a very Blue-book itself?

Of course I directed a special attention to Ireland, and to report if I could whether the country was more prosperous in the repletion of her raggedness, or in

the debility of a diminished population and a deserted soil. I was also to inquire if the wit had expired with the temperance movement, and whether the drollery of the Irish bar had died out with the decline of fun in the hackney-car men—two facts far more copulative than the connection of Tenterden Steeple with the Goodwin Sands.

In a word, I was—to use the vulgar but significant expression—to keep my weather eye open on all around me, and so to employ my opportunities that I might return to my mountain fastnesses wiser than I had quitted them. Let me own—for what I am now saying to my readers has the substance of a confession—that my greatest difficulty was to discard from my mind the influence of certain preconceived opinions, and not to find myself an advocate where I ought to be the judge. It would have been, I acknowledge it, more than agreeable to me to be assured that England was not only stronger, and richer, and greater, but that she was also more tolerant, more charitable, more conciliating in manners, more courteous in forms, than I had left her; that Ireland was improving, her people better fed and clothed, and her fields better tilled, with a wider contentment over the land, and the dawn, at least, of a more conciliatory spirit between hostile classes.

I was not sanguine as to certain things. The newspapers had shown me that the attempts to elevate public taste in the matter of public amusements had scarcely been a success. The aspirations of those who would make England artistic were yet to be realized; but I hoped and believed that something had been accomplished in that direction, and that these great



raree shows, in these gigantic glass houses, must have had something to produce as fruit.

I did not expect great eloquence anywhere, parliament or pulpit. I did not calculate on any extraordinary dramatic ability; neither did I hope to meet learned conversationalists or original talkers, and I had my reward: "Blessed are they who expect little."

From what I have said it will be seen that if hopeful I was moderate, and that if I wished for much I would still be amply satisfied with a mere moiety of my expectations; and thus thinking and feeling, I set forth on my journey.

Paris is a very trying portal to those who visit England. Just as the splendid glitter of a gorgeous drawing-room, resplendent with gold and ablaze with wax-lights, is a fierce contrast to the dingy obscurity of the dining-room, dark with mahogany and solemn in its stately sideboard, the pulse of life bounds lightly with gaiety in the one city, and in the other throbs with the laboured force of a plethora. The mass of England strikes one as more powerful, but wanting in elasticity. London is a hypertrophied heart; it has almost outgrown its functions, and has to labour immensely to maintain the circulation; while in Paris the life-blood bounds freely along, animating, stimulating, and invigorating. I know there is a good deal of "make-up" in all this; no small share of rouge, and pearl-powder, and whisker-dye. But, strange to say, the wearer is imposed on by his own artifices, and when he looks in the glass fancies himself as youthful and as fascinating as paint and enamel would make him.

This self-satisfaction goes a great way in the

charming captivation of the French nature. It is out of the perennial spring of this self-esteem that they give us those intoxicating sips that turn all our heads with enthusiasm for their delightful qualities.

Now, we are so bent on being valued for our sterling gifts in England, that we put on a little extra ruggedness to make the discovery of them more meritorious. We are so resolved to be prized for our good qualities, that we look upon it as a sort of fraud to have graceful ones.

It was on a bright May morning I found myself in that car-drivingest city called Dublin, which, with a few and not very important changes, was exactly as I had left it more than a dozen years before. The most significant alteration was the taking down the railing around the statue of King William, so that the obstruction caused by him of pious memory to the free passage of College Green no longer existed. I wonder, small as the change was, how it was ever accomplished. What a triumph it must have been to Dr. Cullen! and what grief and shame to the Grand Purple somebody in a northern county. There was a statue of Moore, too—a dirty little man hailing a cab! Was this all that Ireland could do for her great lyric poet? It may gratify those who cherish the Union to know that in some points at least the Irish are intensely English, and that in our love of the fine arts, and especially in what regards sculpture, we are as intensely imbued with bad taste and barbarism as the Saxon himself.

Why cannot we hit upon some perishable material wherewith to commemorate our celebrities, so that our shame should not be perpetual? When a distin-

guished Irish gentleman once heard that royalty had graciously been pleased to declare the intention of conferring upon him a baronetcy, he pleaded that he was unconscious of any act in his life which could have justly exposed him to his sovereign's displeasure. "At all events," said he, my innocent child of three years of age could in no way have offended his Majesty. May I entreat, therefore, that the King would graciously commute the sentence to knighthood, so that the disgrace may die with me?"

Could we not hit upon something like this for our statues? Why not make them of bog oak, or, better still, of turf?—the material would have its appropriateness in its very nationality; and how pleasant it would be to feel that the ridicule to which we expose our distinguished countrymen should not be transmitted to a late posterity.

Dublin was, as I have said, unchanged. I verily believe that the same carman that used to take me down to the Pigeon-House as a boy drove me to Morrison's. The orangewomen were in that snug nook next the Provost's house, the same representatives of battered beauty that I remembered them in my freshman days, and the ancient porters, or "Senior fellows," I forget which they call them, at the college gate, looked as austere academic as in the times of my youth. Shall I own that all this was very gratifying to me? and I felt that I loved the trees in Merrion Square all the more that they were the same little scrubby abortions I had known in my boyhood. What an inexhaustible mine of conservatism is Ireland! how persistently she stands fast where she doesn't go

backward! how indolent, how lazy, how devil-may-care looked the whole population!

The International Exhibition was open, a very beautiful and a very interesting sight, but comparatively few went to see it. A review in the *Phoenix*, or a flower-show, “drew” far better than all the display of foreign art or native manufacture. The forty-something regiment carried the day, as it always did, and the bright-eyed belles of Dublin bestowed their sweetest smiles on those dull Dundrearies, not one of whom did not believe that he owed his success to his personal captivations instead of to that intensely national tendency which induces everything Irish to do the honours of Ireland. I sauntered down to the Four Courts, and it did me good to hear an equity pleading in a *brogue* that sounded like an *Æolian* harp over the bog of Allen. Some of those I remembered as jesters were here as judges, not looking so happy at the change as gratitude might have made them. The idlers with the red noses were there still, a shade duskier in garment and a tint rosier in proboscis, but the same in the tone of slang, jocoseness, and slovenly despair as I had ever seen them. A sort of everlasting Decree *nisi* seemed to hang over them, and unless they could be born again, nothing could make them barristers.

Here, however, there was great change. The large incomes that the bar yielded in the days of O’Connell, existed no longer—the leading men not making even half of what the great pleaders realized in those times. I asked often for the explanation: whether the Irish had grown less litigious or more economical in their litigations? Was property less worth fighting for? or were the men who conducted the battle less esti-

mated as pugilists? None could tell me. Perhaps, after all, the crew never worked so vigorously at the pumps where the ship has many leaks, as where the craft has only started a plank and can soon be made staunch again.

There was a look of dreary weariness, of tired-out attention, over every court I entered; and it was only when the crier bawled out Silence! that I knew the court was sitting, and that it was not respectful in the jurymen to yawn so loud.

If there were no fortunes to be made, as little was there any fun.

The wit and the wisdom of Ireland were more closely banded together than people usually think. The days of Irish statesmanship were the days of her oratorical brilliancy and her power in reply. The sparkle of the diamond was the test that vouched for the compact structure of the gem; and it was when Burke and Grattan thundered in the House that the lightning of Sheridan's wit dazzled the dinner-table, and the brilliant flashes of Curran's genius lighted up the whole atmosphere of social life.

Talk of being old! I envy the man whose recollection can recall the days of such companionship; and I would rather live in the memory of these giants of old than go down to Star and Garter festivities with our puny jesters and small-fry epigrammatists.

These men's wit was but the subtilization of their wisdom. In the marvellous chemistry of their minds they could so reduce the substance of long thought that it became capable of administration in the almost impalpable lightness of a jest, and they gave you in an epigram the matter of an epistle.

I must say no more on this theme lest some of my critics, as one has already done, should infer that I was already on the shady side of life at the time of the Union, and that it is out of a head racked with a century of reminiscences I have called forth these memories of by-gones.

Dining-out is much cultivated still in the Irish capital, and with no small success. There is a great deal of good looks, some actual beauty, excellent fish, and very tolerable claret. There is, besides—and long may it survive those scores of English imitations Dublin affects—a hearty cordiality that greets you at the threshold, follows you to the drawing-room, goes with you to the dinner-table, and never leaves you till the last shake-hand at parting. Of this I know of no equal anywhere. England assuredly has nothing like it, nor has France, nor Germany, nor Russia, nor Italy. Nowhere that I have ever been have I felt the same atmosphere of kindly geniality—of that courtesy that will not be satisfied with mere politeness, but asks to be accepted as evidence of goodwill, even to friendship. What a priceless charm is shed over intercourse when this element of liking is diffused through it, when the magic of hospitality makes each guest imagine that he sits in a seat of honour, and is there through no mere ritual of a conventionality, but through the claim of real affection!

It was when coming home one night after one of these dinners I began to question myself whether, in sending a foreigner to Great Britain, I should advise him to begin or to end his experiences with Ireland. There was so much to be said for each mode of procedure, that I felt, as Lord Plunkett once said of a

doubtful issue, "I'd like to have a hundred pounds to argue it either way."

I believe the analogy of the Turkish bath decided me at last. Begin with the hot stage and end with the cold ablution. It will be more invigorating, not to say that in the temperature you come out you will be fitter to deal with the rest of the world. Hence I say, Take out all your fervour in Ireland, and rely on it the wet-blanket that awaits you across the Channel will soon reduce you to the normal standard, and make you, if not as cool as a cucumber, as cool as a Cockney.

Perhaps I care more for all this than other people with "better regulated minds" would care. Perhaps long absence, perhaps peculiarity of temperament, dispose to make these cordial graces especially dear to me, giving them that character which, in native air, is supposed to retain all its virtue of curability. Perhaps I fancy that in such companionship I feel more myself, more sure of my own resources, more sensible of my own identity. Whatever the cause, I know that I never experience the same lightness of heart, the same capacity for enjoyment, the same readiness to employ whatever faculties I possess, as in Ireland; and as I walked through the old courts of Trinity the other day, I felt a thrill through me as though thirty hard years of struggle and conflict were no more than a troubled ocean, and that there I stood, as ready for heaven knows what of fun or frolic, of freshman's folly and hot youth's wild gaiety, as when I lived yonder, over there, at No. 2 Chambers, with Frank Webber for my chum, and poor old Gammon—the junior Dean—over my head.

Amongst the most pleasing, though certainly

amongst the saddest of my Irish experiences, was the every now and then meeting some grave and reverend signor, a judge mayhap, a law-adviser of the Crown, a vicar-general, or something as dignified, who had once been a member of a strange club, of which, in the hot days of youth I was an ardent and very devoted upholder. We called ourselves Burschen, with as little resemblance to our German brethren as need be, and we supped together and made speeches, and sang songs of our own making, and were altogether, as I then thought—and now, with thirty more years of life, still think—the wittiest, pleasantest, jolliest, and most *spirituel* fellows that ever sat round a punch-bowl. Our men were the pick of the learned professions, with a small sprinkling of country squires; and if I only could point out the careers which many of them made in after life—the honours they won, and the high rewards they attained to—it would be seen of what stuff that brilliant youth consisted, who chorused the charter-song of our order, "The Pope he leads a happy life." Oh dear, when I think of writing that song, and bringing it down to the club, and teaching my comrades the grand old German Lied, I am half ready to believe it was but yesterday we met; and I think I see the great meerschaum on the red cushion, the symbol of our union; and as my eyes grow dimmer, visions of the gay company in their scarlet waistcoats come thronging around me; and what fine generous hearts beat under those bright vests, and what good-fellowship linked us!

It was very fine fooling, let me tell you; and for a witty doggrel on the topic of the hour, a smart epigram, or a clever bit of drollery, all I have ever since met of



*beaux esprits* in my own or in other countries could not approach comparison with the "Burschen."

I met a few survivors of that *vieille garde*, and in the emotion with which they recalled those glorious nights, I could mark how bright those spots shone through all the dreary savannahs of life; how they clung to them, and treasured them, firmly persuaded that no accident, no hazard, no fortuitous concurrence of events, could ever bring together again such spirits as made the Burschenschaft. Let no one tell me that there is not a soul in a hearty, racy conviviality, and that in those gatherings where men who like each other blend emotions as they mingle in song, rising with the exaltation of the hour to interchange of friendly pledges, that in such there is not a spirit of affectionate attachment that survives time and distance, so that he on the Himalaya shall toast him on the Baltic coast, and the ice-bound sailor in Behring Strait remembers him who is roasting away under the sun of India.

For myself I can say, the sight of one of my old brethren of the Burschenschaft is such a renewal of gone-by triumphs as few actual pleasures can compete with. It is enough to bring up not alone youth, and its warm friendships and strong attachments, but hopes and high ambitions; and though these be not realized in my own case, I can look around me and think how many of those who were amongst our wittiest and best have lived to charm larger audiences and be the delight of more wide-spread circles than gathered around the board of the Burschen.

In a city so eminently hospitable as Dublin, it must be exceedingly difficult for any Viceroy to represent adequately the high duties that pertain to his station as

a host. Where every one entertains, and entertains too at his best, what can the Lord-Lieutenant do to make his receptions distinctive. Certain men endowed with great graces of manner and demeanour were able to infuse the charm of their personality into their hospitalities, but for the most part Viceroys have relied upon their dignity for their social success ; and there is a something of Brummagem about the Castle and its officials which to a fun-loving people like the Irish invariably suggests more matter for ridicule than reverence. Indeed, I have heard it gravely propounded that if the Lord-Lieutenancy were to be withdrawn there would be nothing left to laugh at in Ireland.

So far, then, from curtailing, I would increase its splendours. I would restore the privileges and honours of which time has robbed it. There should be ladies in waiting and maids of honour, as well as male followers. Glass-coach days, boards of green cloth, knightings, and suchlike, should be of more frequent occurrence. The affectation of distinguished Englishmen to play the high-comedy part with a melodramatic gravity is downright insufferable. They know well, or they might know if they do not, that the whole is *pour rire*, and that though we mere Irish pretend to cling to it as a remembrance of our once greatness, a souvenir of a time when our city was a metropolis, we like it better for its blunders, its mock magnificence, its fictitious greatness, and its real insignificance.

The Irishman is the only man in Europe who could laugh at the mistake of the pilot who was wrecking the ship he was aboard of ; and in this way he enjoys with a racy drollery the blunders that actually lead to disasters. Fun has a stronger hold on his nature than

fate, and you may always pinch his diet if you give him food for a joke.

The women dress better in Dublin than formerly. There is less of that over-decoration about the head, and that neglect of the lower extremities, which poor Thackeray remarked on. In the evening there was far more "freshness" in toilette than I remember of old. They dance, too, with great grace, and all the more to their praise that they have the most execrable ball-music in Christendom. As to good looks, there is not a city of Europe can compete with Dublin. The brows and eyes are of exceeding beauty, the tint of the skin and hair is exquisite; the mouth is weak, the chin ill marked; indeed, it is in the lower part of the Irish face in persons of condition that all that is deficient in expression is found. Among the peasants the lower jaw is only too much charged with meaning, and the meaning, ferocity.

I was consoled for the insult that has denied a Volunteer force to Ireland by remarking how comparatively clean shaven were young Irishmen. Clerks in the custom-house were not, as I have seen elsewhere, got up to resemble the Imperial Guard; nor were respectable shopmen like *Sapeurs*.

And now I want to say a word about the Exhibition, and I have no time, for my portmanteau is packed, my bill paid, and, as the waiter informs me, Mr. O'Dowd's carriage is at the door.

I am truly sorry to go. I have a sort of lurking fear that I am looking at that old College Park for the last time; that I am taking a long adieu of those *cari luoghi* where as a youth I was wont to saunter of afternoons in that peripatetic flirtation which we freshmen

cultivated, singeing our poor wings till we were left past flying. Oh dear ! is there a stone in Dame Street we have not sighed over ?

"You'll be late, sir," whispers the waiter, and I'm off.

## O'DOWD'S EXPERIENCES

### "EN VOYAGE."—ACT II.

THE night was rough as I crossed the Channel, and though I slept tolerably well, I awoke at times to hear a somewhat active discussion carried on by a party of four, whose accents unmistakably declared them from the north of Ireland. So far as my unwilling ears compelled me to overhear, I gathered that they were Belfast men going over to be examined, or to tender instruction to others about to be examined, as to the late riots in that city.

One of them was evidently a person of some importance, either locally or officially. He was a fat, red-faced, bold man, with an expression of blended bull-dog and purse-pride that haunted me through my dreams; and in the deference shown him by the others, and his own assumption thereupon, there was that which, added to an expression he constantly employed—"I am ready to do much for Belfast"—kept me in a state not far from fever.

If there were only three like him in the Town Council, I can well imagine the city becoming the scene of lawless outrage and savagery. His Dogberry insistance, his violence, and his self-conceit were worse

to me than the tossing of the boat and the head-wind ; and the refrain of "much for Belfast" rang through my brain amid all the turmoil and trouble of the sea. Punch, too, stimulated his patriotism, and by the time we reached Holyhead he was eminently calculated to do much for Belfast, for he could do nothing at all for himself.

I believe it is fated that by whatever way we approach London some incongruous sight or hideous object should appear to mar the effect and injure the impression which the greatest city of the world ought to produce on the beholder. This is peculiarly the case as you cross the river to the new Charing Cross Station, and in which the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey are totally effaced by that monster of ugliness—that gigantic telescope tube—that forms the new station. Indeed, it may be feared that Exhibition Palaces and vast railway stations will be the grave of all architecture. Perhaps bee-hives and mole-hills should be the appropriate types for the homes and haunts of an industrial people, far more eager in the pursuit of wealth than careful to display themselves in a picturesque attitude.

I think we have a notion, too, that a certain ugliness is essential to all this practical and business life ; and just as we hate to see a city man deeply immersed in affairs come out as a dandy, we are satisfied to have the haunts of our industry made as shapeless, as monstrous, and as tasteless, as a refined ingenuity can devise them. The Charing Cross Station, then, must be deemed a great success to the lovers of this school. Glass, iron, and asphalt have combined in it to do their very utmost towards deformity.

I do not know how much longer the smaller hotels are likely to hold their own against these immense caravanseries which are springing up around us; but I own that they have a great attraction for me in their quietness, their order, and in the absence of those imposing details of accommodation which larger establishments demand, and where the guest has to learn almost as much as the head-waiter; and, for my own part, I am free to confess that I arrive in general far too much fatigued at the end of my journey to care to perfect myself in the manifestoes which are framed and glazed about my room, or to cultivate my faculties in the telegraphic system of signals which summon the housemaid or ask for hot water. I am content to abide by a bell-rope to ring, and a little patience to respond to it; and I never can divest my head of the notion that of those black-coated ushers, who move about with massive chains round their necks, I am destined to find more reminiscences in my "bill" than are altogether agreeable. On the whole, I am disposed to think that the overdone splendour of decoration, and the enormous amount of attendance, are devised rather to captivate those whose habitual mode of life is peculiarly modest and quiet than for such as are accustomed to more of daily luxury and comfort. To the former, a short absence from home in one of these gilded palaces like the Langham or the Grand Hotel must be a sort of enchanted existence. To lounge on silk and be served on silver—to be waited on by an official more imposingly dignified than his own uncle, must have its ecstatic delight for Jones, and impart an amount of enjoyment to his journey far more intense than what he derives from strange sights and

sounds—a new place and a new people. What convinces me of this is that these over-gorgeous establishments are the peculiar haunts of the Americans. It is the Yankee who delights in the thousand appliances of modern luxury. It is the rough son of toil who has made his bed on the hard ground, and himself split the log over which he has cooked his own dinner, that loves to sleep on a down mattress, and feed on turtle; and there is no feature of these splendid saloons so striking as the disparity between the furniture and the company.

I was glad to find myself in the old Burlington again, so quiet, so orderly, and so scrupulously clean, compared with one of the new-fangled hotels. It was the repose of a country-house after the bustle of a railway station. Your individuality, too, has its respect in these smaller houses. You are not merely 412 or 510—you are Mr. Y., or Mr. X. Your breakfast is served like a meal, not given out as a ration; and in the respectful smile of the waiter as he hands you the *Times*, you have a recognition that you are an admitted member of the great human family, and not a mere accident of humanity with a carpet-bag.

I maintain, too, that you breakfast and dine better in one of these smaller hotels. There is more care taken about the *matériel*, and the cookery is to the full as good. The superiority of the wine is incontestable.

I do not know how it may be with others, but to myself I own a noisy coffee-room is peculiarly disagreeable. There is a decorous solemnity about meal-times which is cruelly jarred on by loud speech or active discussion. When you have disposed the



*Morning Post* against the tea-urn, you want quietness to peruse its columns, far more than to hear how Brown got out of that scrape with the Colonel, or what Jones did at Cremorne. I hope I am not cursed with more irritable nerves than my neighbours, but I have to confess that the disjointed bits of conversation of strangers around me generally jar upon me most unpleasantly. The small drolleries you would have laughed at from your friends, come to your ears in this way as violations of all taste and all morality. Sensible remarks sound as dreary commonplaces, and little jokes, not too bad to laugh at, appear the most dreary attempt at fun, all because you know nothing of the speakers, have no interest in their natures or their lives, and are even ignorant of their names.

And this may show us what a good thing is that which we call sympathy—how tolerant it makes us—how human! How well it repays us for all we cede to it, and what an admirable investment we make when we like our neighbours!

I have summed up all I can say of London, when I say that it was as new to me, just as noisy, as confounding, as addling, as exciting, as tantalizing, and never satisfying, as when first I saw it, thirty-odd years ago.

Just as I feel the roll of the Atlantic is the finest bathing in the world if you be a strong swimmer, so do I believe there is nowhere like London to live in if you be rich enough. It's very poor fun, though, if you can only scramble and struggle, hold on by another, or shout for a life-belt. In such sad plight as this, I fancy, I am just as well in shallow water, stagnant though it be, and a little muddy at bottom.

To be rich enough for London means to be able to enjoy the best society of Europe, in the midst of more material comforts than ever met together elsewhere. “*Non contigit cuique*” to live in Park Lane, however ; and fortunately for us, small minnows of the great fish-pond, there are little pools and rivulets where we can disport ourselves very pleasantly, and where none of us is so ill-mannered as to hint at there being such creatures as whales. Now, though I cannot afford a box at the opera, I should like to go occasionally, of an extra night say ; so I would be well pleased if Fortune permitted me now and then to visit this marvellous place for a week or so, to cross over the great bridges—lounge in its parks—eat its fish dinners—hear a good debate in the House—or, better still, listen to a good dinner conversation, such as I have heard many lately.

I certainly enjoyed myself more in England than I ever remember doing before ; and I am graceless enough to believe that I owe it to myself, mainly at least, and for this reason, that I found there were scores of things which once on a time used to irritate and annoy that now vexed me no longer. Whether it was that when younger the current of life was more turbulent in its very buoyancy, or that a craving ambition to be something, or to do something, quite beyond me, left me restless and fevered, but so it was. I always found myself in London very cross that I was not rich, that I had not a house in Piccadilly and a seat in Parliament, that I was not as much sought after as this, or as much in request as that other ; in fact, that I was such a mere “waif” there was no one so poor as to claim me. Well, time has rolled on and made me no better—far from it, only so much older, more wayworn, and more

stupid ; but as a sort of compensation it has made me more patient. I no longer fret that my place is below the salt ; the fare is very good after all, and scores of pleasant fellows, I well know how much better than myself, sit there also. Our own fault is it, if we keep our eyes on those at the head of the table, and long for the costly viands that are served to them ; our diet is good and wholesome, and very pleasant is the company who partake of it.

I recognize in the world now innumerable traits of kindness, good nature, good feeling, and generosity, that I should once have denied it. I am certain when men are in good health the right predominates in their nature over the wrong ; and I am equally sure that to enjoy this conviction, a man must arrive at the no less wholesome conviction that he himself has got fully as much as he deserves from his fellow-men. Now, it was this same sentiment acting in a variety of ways that made me enjoy London immensely. I had lived long enough in the world to survive many delusions of my own weaving. And I have also come to find out that there is much of solid good—much that is worthy and much that is amiable—in many things that I once disparaged, just as if a man who, having kept by him the notes of a broken bank, were one day to be told that the concern was paying a dividend. There you have at once something of what I experienced in London.

So far as my opportunities extended, I should say that they dine better in England than of yore, they talk better, and they dress better. I don't think the House of Commons so eloquent as I once remember it ; and I am sure that the drama is just as dull, and the acting as intensely vulgar as ever ; but what is to be done

with an audience who never laugh except at old jokes that they are used to, and must have their drollery, as infants have their food, made easy for mastication before it reaches them ?

There is more beauty amongst the women, and more boredom amongst the men of England, than in all the rest of Christendom. The official people are a pestilence of pomposity and dulness that overlays the nation like a sea-fog, and there is no human thing I hold in so much dread as a Government chief-clerk, except it be the little man with the long body and the gauze spectacles, who sits at the door of the House of Commons and flings back your card so disdainfully when you have omitted the name of the member you fain would ask to protect you.

I don't know how I should feel in the body of the House, but if the Speaker were to renew in me the mingled awe and abhorrence with which he of the blue gauze inspires me, I am almost glad that I have not a seat amongst the collective wisdom of Great Britain.

As to the House itself, I believe I can understand why it is that foreigners generally are so very little impressed by its forms or by its appearance. It is eminently commonplace—the dignity of a few does not leaven the mass, and the mass, there is no denying it, have a sort of vestry-quarter-session-like air, that is neither distinctive nor elevated. Nor is it the abode of high eloquence. I heard what I was informed was an animated debate. It was on the Catholic Oaths Bill. Perhaps I expected too much—perhaps (and I suppose it may be the better “ perhaps ”) I have too little experience of the forms of these discussions to know the

class of arguments that are effective ; but it certainly seemed to me that the speakers always took a very low estimate of the question they supported, advocated their opinions from low grounds, and appealed to very small sympathies besides.

Compared with a good debate in the French Chamber, the speaking, as speaking, was very inferior. I am told, and I am willing to believe, that in proportion as we are illogical we are practical, and that our national good sense is never so very conspicuous as when we do something that no amount of casuistry could maintain.

My very brief experience as a listener under the gallery sent me away thinking that all the fluent men were the feeble ones, and that the two or three bungling stammering speakers had really something to say, if they could only hit upon the way to say it. Very poor jokes had a great success, but there was little mercy extended to solemn stupidity, and the grave bore was treated with much indignity.

On the whole, I think I'd rather read of them all in my *Times* than hear them ; and though I am free to own it would be a great triumph to my *amour propre* to be able to pass on before my friend of the gauze spectacles uninterrogated and unstopped, I suspect that, after the first burst of exultation were over, I am just as well off here under my vines and fig-trees.

I have heard it said that able men, when gathered into a compact union, by no means maintain the great superiority which their separate and individual excellence would seem to warrant ; at the same time, that inferior capacities benefit immensely by amalgamation ; and thus is it parliaments disappoint and military

messes astonish us. I leave this problem to wiser heads than my own—and, I hope, even to a cooler season than the present—to decide upon.

One thing there was which never ceased to surprise me, the great uniformity of thought and sentiment in each of the two great party divisions of the empire. Every man and every woman either thought Mr. Gladstone a phoenix of statecraft or an infuriated dangerous democrat. Each saw in Lord Russell the hope of English foreign policy, or a meddling, obstructive, obtrusive minister—ever offering unwanted advice, and whenever snubbed and insulted, pointing to his patience under indignity as the sign of a pacific policy:—the avowed respect of all sides for Lord Palmerston only showing how far more essential it is that a ruler of men should understand human nature—its many-sided moods—than that he should be a great orator, a great financier, a great rhetorician, or a profound thinker.

It says a good deal for the man, it says something for the nation, when qualities such as his should have this immense success—when the sentiment of the "family" should so extend to a whole people, that they would consent to be governed by the same sort of homely dictates as would apply to a household. What a precious gift is this same geniality! How it binds up together, too, a mass of other qualities—a sort of moral "annular ligament" that imparts strength and symmetry together!

The man who, with an instinctive rapidity, can say what scores of other men separated from him in class, station, and sentiment will pronounce upon any measure—how they will regard it, what hope and what

fear from it—whether dread its consequences or laugh at its provisions,—such a man will always have great qualities for the leadership of an assembly like the House of Commons.

And it is in this very fact we see the vast superiority of the House to every other parliamentary assembly in Europe. In England, Parliament is a living thing. It is not a debating society, nor an arena; it is a thing of human feelings and passions. It has a heart—a somewhat hard heart at times—but it never ceases to beat boldly and bravely. I have never met with but one foreign statesman who either could comprehend this characteristic, or who could himself, had he been born an Englishman, have displayed in his own person the advantages of our system. This was Cavour. Cavour would have been as great in Westminster as he was in the Palazzo Carignano. Indeed, I am by no means certain England would not have been to such a man his truest, most appropriate field of action.

How well the women ride in the Park! how easily—how jauntily—how confidently! How little does that hot-tempered chestnut interrupt the attention that pale girl with the blonde ringlets is bestowing on the whiskered cavalier at her side! and how pleasantly that laugh rings out from her yonder, whose mettlesome grey plunges like a fish! They sit like centaurs. I can't say as much in praise of their "hands"—some are "hard"—almost all are careless. Now, the fact is, riding, like whist, demands an undivided attention. You must be a perfect master of either. You must, so to say, have imbibed every precept and every knack into your system as a part of yourself, before you can

dare to divert your attention from either your horse or your "hand."

Not talk because I'm on horseback—not flirt because my mare is a buck-leaper! Oh! Mr. O'Dowd, you are not serious? I am, my dear Julia, perfectly serious; and I say, if the nag be worth riding, he will require far more of your watchfulness and devotion than you are disposed to withdraw from Cornet Blaze of the Blues.

Mind, I do not pretend that you will either smash his knees or be thrown. I do not anticipate any serious mishap to your horse or yourself. I only say you will do both your dumb beasts more justice if you will think of your hand when you are "out," and of your heart when you come home.

And why do I give you these counsels? Because you are not alone more beautiful and more graceful, more charmingly feminine and more fascinating in every way, than all the other women in Europe; but you are more sweet-voiced and more gentle, and ten thousand times more lovable, than them all. Be perfection, then,—and it is so easy for you! And when you only remember how lamentably devoid of any individual interest in these counsels is he who gives them—he who only saw you passing by, and may never see you again—take them at least forgivingly.

I had a number of things in my head a minute ago about fish-dinners, railroad-smashes, poisoning, Mr. Fechter, and *The Owl*, but these charming canterers have scampered off with me, and I am away over imaginary prairies, and I know I shall never be back in time for the post.



## IN RETIREMENT.

WHEN I had got back over the Alps after that brief glance of London life and manners of which I ventured a passing word in these pages, my first care was to seek out some quiet spot—a tranquil corner—wherein I might meditate over all I had so lately seen and heard, and, what was fully as important to me, bring my mind back to those routine ways of thought which constitute, at the same time, the labour and the happiness of my life. For, let me confess it to you, dear reader, you are far more the complement of my existence than I ever was, or could hope to be, of yours. I owe to you, and the share of attention and interest you bestow upon me, not alone the energy and the wish to please you, but an unceasing desire so to employ my faculties that I may keep the place in your esteem you have vouchsafed me, and as I grow in years grow more worthy of your favour.

It was to talk to you that I first suggested these O'Dowderies—to have an opportunity of saying, without any thought as to the manner, or any study as to the expression, something about the scores of things which are every day turning up amongst us—to talk

to you in all the freedom of intimacy, and to try if I could not infuse into our intercourse that genial sentiment that comes of a trustful freedom on one side, and a most generous and indulgent good-nature on the other.

In a word, I desired to be as much at my ease with you as though you had been sitting with me under the vine-woven trellis where I write these lines, and amid the puffs of your cuban, nodding me a kindly assent to something I have told you.

Almost every man who has seen much of life has something to say about it, which if not positively new or original, yet may not have been said in his way or with his words. As the flavour of the cask imparts its quality to the liquor, so will the individuality tinge opinion. Now, I never assumed to have seen or heard more than my neighbours; all I pretended was, that what I had seen or heard I have done with my own eyes and ears; and what I related of these experiences I had told in my own way—a very wayward and discursive way at times, but never a forced, never an assumed way. To make a clean breast of it, good reader, I began these sketches of life and manners pretty much as some drawing-room musician is persuaded by his friends to go on the stage, assured that the soft cadences that charmed the polite circle of his acquaintance will find favour with the public. So have I been talking for twenty-odd years the sort of thing you have lately been gracious enough to read; and it was only t'other day a friend remarked to me, "It is your best wares, Cornelius, you have never brought to market. Your letters are better than your books. Try if you couldn't write that anecdote

just as you have told it to me." Ah, that is the real difficulty. The pleasant freedom of the voice, the happy union of cadence and gesture, the spontaneity that comes of self-reliance as one feels his success,—where are these in presence of your ink-bottle and your foolscap? No, there's no doing the thing in that fashion; all the ingenious contrivances that ever were invented never imparted to the corked-up flask of Vichy or Carlsbad the invigorating freshness of the waters as they bubbled and sparkled from the fountain; and though I try to make my liquor like Allsopp's ale—strong enough to bear a voyage—I feel how I injure the flavour of my tap by the adulteration.

Very full of these considerations, very eager to carry them into practice, if I could but find the way, I set about thinking of where I should settle down as a meet spot to recover the lost balance of my mind, swung out of its equilibrium by London flatteries and fish-dinners, and call myself back from the glories of polished banter and whitebait to the peaceful pleasures of my own thoughts.

I knew of such a place, one of those lonely nooks, a cleft between the mountains, widening as you enter into a bay, watered by the blue sea, and sheltered by foliage of every shape and colour, from the oak to the olive. One of those places of which, seen at sunrise, golden and pink streaked, in the hot blaze of noon, or in the stillness of a starry night, with the sea a-glitter with golden glories, you cannot say to what peculiar aspect you attach the highest sense of beauty; such a blending is there of softness and sublimity, so grand and yet so homely, for it is eminently a place to live in—to dream in—to float along existence as one skims

the still sea, waveless, almost windless, deliciously tranquil on all sides.

Hither I came, with such resolutions too! What was I not to do? I apportioned out my whole day, from my first morning swim, ere the sea grew hot and fiery, to my last row at night, when the land-breeze came through the orange groves. I was to work too, if that be the name for the sort of thing I do; that irresponsible excursion over the notes of the human piano that never rises to the dignity of a melody, and stops short at a chord, or dies away in a cadence. I was, however, to work, in so far as jotting down my fancies might mean work. I was to muster out the ragged army of my recollections, and brigade them with the new levies of my late experiences, and "march past" with what pomp I might.

It has been a sort of lifelong delusion with me, that some time or other I was to chance upon a certain spot so lovely, so beautiful, so satisfying in all the requirements of scenery and tranquillity, so full of natural beauty, and so removed from all intrusive boredom, that I was to do I know not what wonderful things, not merely better than what I had yet done, but far and away above what any one suspected me capable of; for, of course, I could not have been before the world thirty years without the fervent conviction that I was only half understood, half appreciated.

Yes, said I, I will heat both boilers, and get full steam up, and the world shall see at last the speed that is in me. I have never yet tried "the measured mile" under fair circumstances; either the weather has been unfavourable, my craft out of trim, or my "bearings have been heated," which may mean my temper ruffled.

At last, however, is the time come for me to assert myself, and with this assurance down I went to my little bay. I know not how it may be with other people, but to myself there is a wonderful charm in beginning anything. There is a smack of youthfulness about the idea of a fair start that is wonderfully captivating. I enjoy my soup at dinner with not merely the relish due to its own flavour, but with a foretaste of joys to come. I glory in the first burst and the first fence in a hunting-field. The first squall that sends my boat gunwale under, gives me a thrill of mingled ecstasy and fear, more exquisitely exciting than a whole day's experiences of escape and peril. The mere fact of beginning, therefore, sent its sense of enjoyment through me, though not fully certain upon what topic I was about to amuse or instruct humanity.

Subjects had been cropping up since I last wrote. I was not, of course, going to touch the Negro nor Schleswig-Holstein. President Johnson and Count Bismarck were both safe. As little was I disposed to treat of the French Emperor. These are the stock pieces of the world's drama—every one has seen them to satiety. Politics had fallen asleep; and the only speaker was that irrepressible bore Mr. Roebuck, who is tolerable on the one sole condition that he makes himself ridiculous.

There were, however, some themes on which one might compose variations. There was Mr. Meons and the Brigands, to whom I could not help applying Churchill's lines—

“Inhuman monsters; was it not a shame  
To hurt a man so harmless and so tame?”

for in all my human experiences, I never forgathered with a less aggressive or more peaceful mortal. There was then the Grand Anglo-Gallic Fraternization—that affectionate meeting of two friends to show each other their duelling-pistols, as the surest and safest guarantee of mutual respect and forbearance.

When Robert Macaire and his father-in-law each discover that the other can cheat as well as himself, they lay down the cards and embrace, saying, *Nous sommes frères*. This is the essence and spirit of our French fraternization. Now, I have no objection to the league, if it only be rightly understood. I avow frankly and openly that there could be no such disaster to humanity as a war between England and France. All I ask is, let the peace stand on the ground that it really rests on—mutual convenience and advantage. Let there be no pretence of that love which does not exist, and that esteem of which there is not even a shadow.

In the overwhelming self-conceit and self-esteem of his nature, John Bull fancies he must be liked if he be but known, and so sure is he of reciprocity that he gives his friendship as he gave free-trade, fully assured that he would get as good as he gave; and it is only when pinched by a restrictive tariff that he begins to perceive that the foreigner had another and different measure than *his*. In the very spirit of this free-trade policy, John offered his friendship duty-free, and France responded by politeness. Now, friendship and politeness are not the same, but they represent exactly what we give to France and get back in return.

Don't imagine the French like you—don't lay the flattery to your hearts that they understand, or, if they

understood, would care for, the really good qualities you possess. The things they give you credit for are your not very graceful imitations of themselves, and for these they will ridicule you at the first moment of a national coldness, or at the first show of a national estrangement. They laugh at you; and if they ceased to laugh at you, they would lose one great stronghold of their comic drama, and be reduced to the *mari infortuné* as the sole absurdity of human nature.

They laugh at you because you emblemize so much that they like to ridicule, and you point the moral of what they glory to make absurd. They laugh at you, besides, because you are the very converse of all that is French, and in your cookery, your dress, your social habits, and your politeness, you offer a standing protest against that Parisian standard which all the rest of Europe recognize as the pyramid of civilization. I know newspaper writers will tell you that these are the coarse and vulgar prejudices of a past age, that they are no more akin to modern notions than Hogarth's picture of the Calais Gate. I have read wonderful leading articles on the cordial good understanding that subsists between the two countries, and I have gone down to a foreign club to hear more covert sneers at English credulity on the subject of these very articles than were at all either pleasant or assuring.

Let us not quarrel by all means, but let us not hug. I see scores of reasons for not going to war with France. I see double as many for not running into close embrace with her. It is not alone that you must mix intimately with Frenchmen to know their feeling towards England, but you must live on terms of easy relationship with the other nations of Europe, with

whose people Frenchmen discuss Englishmen and their habits. You must hear what they say of England in Russia, in Austria, in Italy; how they criticise our institutions and question our pretensions to third parties—what they say of the scandals of our private life, given so publicly as they are in our newspapers—what they remark on the insufficiency of our means to effect a mere tenth of what we presume to dictate—what they observe on the disparity between our wealth and our power—how they harp on the crimes so flauntingly ventilated by the press, and the hypocritical labours of a legislation on the subject of Sunday refreshment or Sunday recreation, so that infanticide may flourish while the tea-garden is put down.

Launch a Frenchman out on such themes as these, and then tell me what value you attach to all this *entente cordiale* of which we are so vainglorious. Remember that this Frenchman's civilization is not your civilization—his ideas of literature and art are the reverse of yours—his political hopes, fears, and ambitions are opposed to yours as is black to white. He aspires to changes and modifications and alliances you neither want nor wish for; and you must either consent to follow France into a policy which is not your policy, or to rupture this eternal friendship by some refusal which, like that of Lord Russell about the Congress, will lead to an estrangement only short of a separation. These hollow friendships, like rotten artillery, always explode at the most inconvenient moment; and so sure as we swear to such a bond with France, you will see an increased activity in our dockyards, and read of more trials at Shoeburyness and more plate-hammering at Millwall.



But why have I heated my blood while the thermometer points to 93° in the shade with all this tirade about Frenchmen? Do I not know that John Bull likes to be deceived, and that there is no deception he so greedily devours as the notion that foreigners like him? I'm sure I hope they do! I can only say, if it be so, that the duplicity of the Continent exceeds all that I have ever believed of human nature.

No more of politics; now for peace, sea-breezes, orange-blossoms, and grape-clusters. And really there is in the hot basking noon of Italy, while the ear rings with the cicada, and the very atmosphere glitters, a something of intense enjoyment, as though it were a world made for pure delight, for all that can steep the senses in rich enjoyment, and draw over the mind a dreamy rapture, the seventh heaven of ecstatic fancy.

Who wants to do more than live in such a climate? Who needs books, newspapers, visitors, or occupations? Who asks for more than the tempered light of the half-darkened room, the faint odour of the lemon-groves, the liquid ripple of the tideless sea, or perhaps the faint tinkle of the guitar, from the awning-covered boat that steals noiselessly under the cliff?

I take no shame to myself that I cannot work beneath such a sun, and I resign myself to a voluptuous indolence, as though obeying an ordinance of nature. I reflect, however, a great deal, but I do so always with my eyes closed, and a pillow under my head, and with such a semblance of perfect repose that calumnious people have said I was asleep.

These hours of reflection occupy a large share of the forenoon, and a considerable portion of the time between an early dinner and sunset. They are periods

of great enjoyment ; they once upon a time were even more so, when an opinion prevailed in my household that it would be little short of sacrilege to disturb me, such being the creative hours of my active intelligence. The faith, I grieve to say, has long since changed for a less reverent version of my labours, and people are less scrupulous about interruption.

Long habit, however, stands my part, and I can, however aroused, return to my broken reflections at any moment, and follow out their course as pleasantly—ay, and to the full as profitably—as before.

I lay in one of these intellectual swoons, after a long swim, with a faint sea-breeze stealing gently into the room through the closed jalousies. There was a nice odour of jasmine and verberna in the room, and a low murmuring ripple beneath the window, all of which served to soothe and calm me, making what might have been the labour of thought a mere dream-ramble of the mind. I lay I know not how long in this state, when a stunning thud seemed to shake the air, and made the very room vibrate. I started up, and suddenly a deep boom of a gun swelled out, another and another followed, and on they rolled in measured time, till I counted seventeen. I flung wide my jalousies, and there, across the entrance of my little bay, there stood five mighty three-deckers, all canvas set, and standing proudly in, with their royals almost touching the clouds. From one which had just saluted the smoke hung lazily along the side. It was a grand and noble sight, not the less touching as a voice behind me cried out—"Here comes the English fleet!"

Now it is a very different thing to see a three-

decker at Spithead, and to see her swinging round to her anchor in a foreign bay—to mark her tall spars rising above the surrounding shipping, and her glorious “Jack” floating out proudly to the breeze. It is not merely a splendid ship that you look at—it is not only her graceful lines, her taper spars, her majesty, and her strength, you admire—you feel it is something of England herself—a fragment of the great country is before you—that in that floating fortress England is represented; that English hearts and English blood animate that mass, giving it a special character distinctive from all around it; that it is by such as these, covering every sea and resting in every roadstead, we are known as a people to the whole world; and that, by the voice of *their* thunders, we are able to demand reparation for wrong, and respect for our name throughout the globe. I own to you, even at the cost of that interruption to reflection of which I have spoken, I felt very proud to see these majestic ships—followed soon after by three others—anchor in my bay.

Three of the monsters were iron-clads, and in their lower masts, and, to my eyes, misshapen prows, very inferior in beauty to their wooden neighbours, one of which was perhaps the handsomest frigate in the world. They made, however, a glorious spectacle; and as I gazed at them I felt myself humming unconsciously “Rule Britannia,” and recalling that marvellous picture of Stanfield’s of Trafalgar at four in the afternoon.

Scarcely had they anchored than their launches were seen—black, brown, and white—with snowy awnings, sweeping with measured stroke towards shore. I hastened down to the little jetty eager to see

the great brawny fellows, with their clear blue eyes and Saxon faces, so resolute-looking and so ready, and all so unlike the swarthy sailor of the south, with his treacherous black eye and his hand stealthily seeking for his knife; and there they were, in gigs and fast cutters and launches and dingies, as coolly undergoing the stare of the multitude as if the prying faces that peered at them were as lifeless as they were dirty.

I suspect there must be something provocative to foreigners in that careless sort of independent air your English sailor assumes as he steps on a foreign shore—a something that seems to say, So long as you are quiet and civil, and only cheat me, I'll not do you any harm; but if you show your teeth, or bristle up, then Heaven help you. The lazy lounge of the blue-jacket, changed in a twinkling for the activity of the tiger, is so very distinctive amidst a prowling, skulking, grimy set of lazy rascals, hitching their ragged coats over their idle shoulders, and scowling unmistakable hatred at the clean-clad, well-fed tars.

It was a long time since I had seen a veritable midshipman, a creature of four feet three, with a nice soft blue eye, and a mouth of gentle meaning curved into a command shape, and made stern by singing out, "Bow there, fenders!"

There is something very picturesque in that blending of early boyhood with the officer. The little fellow who would be the companion of his younger sisters, sitting up tiller in hand, and shouting out, "Give way, men!" with a voice vibrating with power. I speak only here of the small-craft midddy, the aspiring urchin who wants to waltz with the largest partner in the room, and affects to take more rum in his grog than

the lieutenant; for there are other midshipmen so very near to the wardroom in size, gait, and demeanour, that you only know they are not of it by some stripe the less on a sleeve or a cuff.

The small middy, however, is a great type. I have one in my eye that amused me and interested me much; we called him Cupid, from his incessant pursuit of the sex in ball-room and picnics; he was the rival of the most pretentious men in the room, and not always the unsuccessful one. He was a fine little fellow, who brought the hardihood of a "cutting out" to the tour of a polka, and went at the Lancers as if he were boarding a Frenchman. The dash and daring had its effect, for pretty girls liked to dance with him; and in the triumphant air with which he would walk off with the *belle* of the room, you saw the germ of that audacity that would one day grace a gazette.

*Bonne chance, Cupidon!* I hope you have many as happy days and nights before you as I have lately seen you enjoying so heartily.

It is, to be sure, a very racy delight on land that the sailor feels. On shore he goes at its pleasures with such a will! Nor is there anything more remarkable than his trustful sense that the landsman, knowing how little he sees of *terra firma*, will generously concede to him scores of immunities he would never yield to one of his own order: a great secret of sailor success is this heartfelt confidence in the good feeling towards him. Look at that young lieutenant yonder, who has so interested his pretty partner. Is he talking love to her? Has he got her into the land of moonlight and Shelley? Is it softness and seductive

nonsense he is whispering into her ear? Not a bit of it? he's telling her how heartbroken he is; that old Bracehard, who never comes ashore, and doesn't care for blue eyes or white shoulders, won't take his middle watch; or how that cruel commander Startem is going to stop his leave for the rest of the cruise, for heaven knows what inscrutable omission in things naval.

"You think our gunnery lieutenant, Fuze, such a nice fellow, so soft spoken and so gentle—I wish you saw him on board, that's all." Oh, what stores of wardroom sorrows does he pour into her ears—the capricious favouritism of the captain, the protective kindness of the first lieutenant for some middy with a pretty sister. It is doubtless a strange way to make love, but there are so many portals to the female heart, who knows which is the direct one? Othello himself won his bride by tales of professional success, and it is just possible that a Queen's Counsel would prefer his suit by a *Fi Fa*, or a *Nisi Prius*.

At all events these sailors have their success; women like them for their indiscretions, they are so certain to compromise themselves; they open a courtship with the Lancers, and are sure to propose with the polka; and though nothing can be less serious in consequences than these advances, I believe women like them. "I sent him off, of course," can be said so triumphantly, with such a blended pride and pity, too, as to be positively becoming. The energy of the sailor to squeeze the last drop out of his land enjoyments is remarkable, an extra half-day ashore being well worth a month's cruelties and restrictions when he goes to sea again.

Very little does it trouble that fair ringletted coquette as she says, "You are not going yet ; remember I promised you the galop," that her Circe syllables are to cost the poor fellow nights of rain on the deck and scorching days of boat-duty—that to swell the train of her rejected suitors in the cotillon, the victim will have hours in his little cell of a cabin with a marine at the door.

After all, however unphilosophic it may seem, this same living for the hour is not a bad training for a life that must ever be made up of emergencies. The sea-life is all spasmodic. The whistle that sends men aloft to reef topsails, the drum that beats to quarters, the hoarse summons to take in sail, are such abrupt calls on human activity, that to reply promptly to them a man's nature must be strung up to a condition of everlasting readiness ; and it is in alternate apathy and energy the sailor lives. No man, like him, rouses himself from sleep without a trace of slumber about him ; no man, like him, meets an emergency so calmly, and knows so soon when the peril has passed off ; and these conflicts with himself—for they are conflicts—impart to his manner a blended indolence and activity, dashed throughout with self-confidence, which is totally unlike anything we see on land.

I am not surprised to find few Irishmen in the navy. The severity of discipline must ever appear to the Celt the very acme of despotic cruelty. To carry out, besides, through one's whole life, the regulated deference to one's superior, and to feel that your captain in society is as much your master as your captain on the quarterdeck, is a hard trial—to feel you are never to get rid of the Navy List, but, Sinbad-like, go about

the world with a First Lord on your back—ah me! these be sore inflictions; and when I saw Cupid, even Cupid, timorous about engaging the partner that the first lieutenant had cast his eyes on, I own I felt happy that fate had given me mother earth for the scene of my labours, and only left the sea for so much of life as might be comprised in a sail or a swim, my lunch with the captain, or my glass of sherry in the wardroom.

If I do not desire to be a sailor, I like sailors greatly—I like their loyalty—I like their love of country—I like their honest belief in the superiority of England over France, Russia, Germany, and everywhere else. I like their especial pride in their own ship, be she wood or iron, and their heartfelt conviction that she can steam, sail, and steer better than anything afloat. I recognize in all these the compensations for scores of real hardships—for the hurricanes that split topsails and carry away studdingsail-booms—for snow-storms in the Baltic and white squalls in the Mediterranean—for, in one word, more of actual peril, and more of the active qualities that are called forth to meet peril, than a landsman knows in the whole length and breadth of his existence; since there is not a middy sent on shore of a dirty morning in November to fetch the post or despatch a telegram that does not stand face to face with more downright danger—danger demanding a steady hand, a ready eye, a bold heart, and a firm will to confront—than your “lay lord,” or your “under-secretary,” in his carpeted room at Whitehall, ever experiences during the whole dull coil of his red-tape existence. If last, not least, I like the sailor’s hospitality—so frank, so genial, so hearty as it is. Like him as much as you will on shore, he is fifty times a



better fellow when you see him on board ; and, strange as it may seem to you, innumerable nothings that occurred in his land experiences—little trifling civilities, too small to be called attentions—will all be treasured up by him and recalled as things to be grateful for, and this great bronzed dark-whiskered fellow, with a voice like a brass trumpet, will show a nature soft, I was going to say, as a girl's—heaven help me to a better simile, for no girl above ten years of age ever had one-half his real tenderness.

A sailor's politics are very amusing. Not forming his opinions day by day, and imbibing his impressions on events by the channels of social intercourse, he has to read himself up by three months of the *Times*, and come to his judgment on events through a most laborious effort of memory. That occasional confusions occur, that now and then slight mystifications embarrass him, is neither wonderful nor unreasonable ; not to say that his great personal interest in all administrations points to that most inscrutable thing, the Admiralty, of whose cruelty he can talk with eloquence, and of whose gross ignorance he discourses with a hearty enthusiasm.

When a great legal authority—a Chief-Justice, I believe—once at a Bar dinner responded to the toast of “the Navy,” on the plea that he had begun life as a midshipman, Lord Brougham, who had not heard of his colleague's antecedents, attributed his zeal to a mistake, and said he must have thought he was returning thanks for the “Bar,” and that navy was spelt with a “K.”

I want to part pleasantly from all those generous fellows with whom I have lived of late so happily. I

drink to them all health and prosperity, be they iron or wood. They can have no successes, no advancements, no bigger swabs on their shoulders, nor broader lace on their caps, than I wish and hope for them.

*P.S.*—I have found that my sea-friends are dissatisfied with me for a judgment I once passed on naval whist. They arraign me for its fairness. I now apologize publicly, and own I was wrong.

I have lately played largely with blue-jackets, and am free to declare that I met several who remembered what was the trump, and only two who revoked, and *they* belonged to the same ship. Delicacy forbids me to say her name, but it is gratifying to think she will soon be paid off, and out of commission.

## HOW OUR VILLAGE BECAME A CAPITAL AND NEVER KNEW IT.

I LIVE in a "small neighbourhood," that is to say, I live in a circle so very limited that each of us knows perfectly every circumstance of the other—his means, his tastes, his joys, troubles, and creditors. Were I, for instance, to try to palm off on this intelligent public any pleasing fiction about my having come to this remote spot to devote myself to that great historical work I am composing on Scandinavia, and of which I have already sold the French translation for twenty thousand pounds; or were I to attempt to ventilate the notion that Mrs. O'Dowd and I are miserable at the forced separation we live in; that I am in daily pursuit of a beautiful house with beautiful grounds, a beautiful view, and beautiful gardens for her—devoted as she is to "the beautiful" in all things;—there is nothing of either sex, over twelve years of age, would not laugh me to scorn. I repeat, that we all live with such accurate information about each other, that disguise or concealment would be the most miserable of all failures; and this same openness is more effectual in the suppression of many little affectations and snobberies than a *régime* of the most perfect good taste and good man-

ners. We have public opinion in its most condensed form, like those patent essences, a spoonful of which is equal to a pint of the ordinary decoction; and I defy the most refractory spirit amongst us to brave its judgments or make light of its decrees.

I could no more dare to give sixpence more for the turbot in the market than my neighbour has offered, than I could make love to the wife of his bosom; for I know that the fishmonger must come down to *his* price, and it would be perfidy in me to enhance it.

In the same way I could no more pretend to suggest that our whist-points should be twenty centimes instead of ten, than I could assume to augment the income-tax. The man who would venture on such innovations would be hooted!

If there be some tyranny in this, as perhaps there is, it is not also without its advantage. It is a death-blow to all pretension, and to that worst form of pretension which consists in rivalry. We have none of this.

The dietary of a workhouse is not more uniform than the entertainments we give each other. My leg of mutton is not a shade fatter, nor an ounce heavier, than my friend Simmons's next door; and I'll take good care that *his* chickens are not plumper than *mine*.

If I appear in a new coat a little earlier than my neighbours have come out in their fresh apparel, I am strictly careful to explain the circumstance, or attribute it to some disaster to my old one.

I have known public feeling even extend to the number of letters despatched or received by one amongst us, necessitating the precaution of having a

portion of the correspondence addressed to a neighbouring village.

If I chafed a little at first at all this, I have learned to like it at last. In exchange for the pressure that I submit to, what a widespread freedom have I! If I be somewhat limited in my dealings with my own affairs, what a grand liberty do I enjoy with those of my neighbour! I should like to see how he would dare to give his daughter in marriage, to buy a new chimney-pot, or set up a wheelbarrow, without my cognizance and my approval.

With occasional little creaks and jars, our bearings, as the steam-engineers say, do get heated now and then; but I repeat, with slight occasional frictions, the system works well—we have fraternity and equality, and perhaps as much liberty as is good for us. None of us ever travel, or if by any chance we do, we are especially minded to leave our foreign impressions with our contraband cigars at the frontier, and to re-enter our Happy Valley as simple-hearted, as bigoted, and as uninstructed as we quitted it.

If, however, we acquire little, we unlearn nothing, and time finds us only changed in aspect or activity—the soul is the same.

Strangers seldom come amongst us, and if they do, they soon take their leave. It is possible they find us dull—all exclusive societies are open to this reproach, and the Faubourg in Paris has long been deemed dreary by the “outsiders.” Perhaps, too, we require for our due appreciation a closer view, a calmer inspection, a more careful examination, than mere passers-through could afford us. There are certain pictures before which the connoisseur might be satisfied to sit long

and patiently, waiting mayhap for the happy gleam of light here, or the half tint there, not impossibly aiding by a wet sponge the secret wealth of rich colouring to develop itself, and show what depth and power can come out of seeming blackness.

So say I of us. It is the eye of observant knowledge can alone see how beautifully "composed" we are—how much of "effect" we possess—how correctly drawn, how delicately coloured, how picturesquely grouped.

I remember the time when I used to regret that the world knew so little of us. I thought—Heaven forgive me for it—that it would throw an interest over our daily lives, if we felt that we pointed a moral or adorned a tale. I fancied that a graceful pen, something like his who sketched the Brunnens of Nassau, could find in us a most congenial theme. With our glorious landscape, our sweet climate, our rich vegetation, and our little old-world ways of courtesy, kindness, and curiosity, our lively impulse to puff ourselves and pry into our neighbours—a really fair and intelligent mind, I believed, would see no littleness in the character of our tastes and pursuits. Things are only little or big relatively. Not to say that it is not in a lone sequestered nook, with mountains behind and the sea before, that a man would come to inquire what was the last move of Bismarck—would France show her teeth about M. Ott, or would she seek, in a concession, a new alliance?—would the Pope accept the situation, cross his arms on his breast, and play martyr, when the French retired? or would he enlist another Irish contingent, and flourish a shillelagh in the face of Victor Emmanuel? or would the Irish priests, making

capital of their condemnation of Fenianism, ask for the destruction of the Established Church as the price of their loyalty? I say, that to discuss these and their like, or to learn the last guesses that shrewd men made on them, few would repair to our neighbourhood. Our local interests are supreme to us. There is not one of us who would not rather find out how Mrs. Rigges got that new bonnet with the fall of real lace—"Valenciennes, my dear"—than know how Prussia jockeyed Austria out of Holstein; and for myself, I'd give a crown to learn where Grub got his ranunculus roots, and I'd not give a centime to know whether Prince Amadeo will marry the Spanish Infanta, or where the Prince of Augustenburg Sonderburg is to go when the order comes to pass him on to his parish.

Being such as I have said, it may be imagined what an amount of excitement was created in our circle by the announcement that a Duchess—Arch or Grand, I'm not sure which, nor whether she were Russian or Austrian—had been advised by her physician to try the mildest air of Europe. State reasons prevented her choosing a capital, for great people have to be diplomatic as well as dyspeptic; and her Imperial Highness had to seek out a spot whence she could hear and not be heard—see, and not be seen—meanwhile enjoying fresh air and healthful exercise,—two luxuries very seldom within the reach of Highnesses, imperial or royal.

Though there were only two villas in the neighbourhood which could accommodate her, we had at least two thousand disputes as to which she had taken; and I have, at the hour I write, a very angry cor-

response with an ex-major of marines, in defence of my reasons for believing it was the Sindaco's house and not Count Nerli's her Highness had engaged, he having pledged his word that he was at the post-office when Baron Katchachinkoff observed to Count Scratchedredagen—I forget what. I only know that the Duchess has taken both villas, and we have had all our bitterness for nothing. The next speculation that engaged us was, what line of conduct was to be adopted with regard to her Highness? Were we to call and leave our names? were we to ask to be presented, or were we to “wait to be asked”? I have a cut with my oldest friend in the colony on this, and I don't think we shall ever speak to each other again. The discussion was precisely one that excites the most lively animosities and stirs up feelings the most acutely irritating, since it involves not alone your good taste and sense of propriety, but your breeding, your manners, your habits of life, the people with whom you have lived, and the society which you frequented. Here, again, a little patience might have stood us in stead, for her Highness's doctor informed us yesterday that she would know none of us—she came for quiet. It was because there was no “society” (*sic*), that she had selected the spot. The ambassador had given her the assurance that there was not one person in the whole vicinity could have any pretension to obtrude upon her. Hence had she come; “but,” added the medico, “she is very benevolent, and you will find she will not leave the place without giving you reason to remember her generosity.”

This closed the subject, and the most courageous amongst us has never reopened it.



For a while we tried to console ourselves by a little scandal. We endeavoured to show each other why her Imperial Highness could not cultivate us—that there were dreadful stories of her, about. Shocking things had happened at Carlsbad, or Ems, or Ischyl. I heard Rigges declare that he would take Mrs. R.'s arm, and lead her out of the room, if the Duchess were to enter it! This moral turn was a beneficial alterative after our late repulse, and we pursued it for at least three weeks; and, like the gentleman in "*Tristram Shandy*," who passed days in speculating on what he should do if he were to meet a white bear, we spent hours in imagining what line of conduct we should adopt if any unfortunate accident should bring us face to face with her Highness. The steady stare—the defiant look—the glance at once condemnatory and haughty we were to bestow on her, became so popularly practised amongst us that we met each other on the parade with a frown, and only relaxed our sternness as we discovered our mistake.

I am certain she must have felt painfully all our severity. Rank and station are very fine things, but they cannot obliterate flesh and blood; and I assure you, I often pitied that woman as I saw her strolling along the seashore, drawing lines with her parasol in the sand, or sitting gazing on a fern—trying—trying to interest herself in objects that could not possibly supply a thought.

Our speculations were destined to have occupation nearer home! It was on a Wednesday—I am not likely to forget the day—it was our fish day, since on Monday the fishermen are sleeping off Sunday's drunkenness, and Tuesday is their first day at sea, hence

Wednesday is the first market. I went out early that morning, and met Major Hogg coming back, his face angry-looking and flushed. "You needn't go to the Piazza, O'Dowd," cried he, "if you can't eat a skate or a dog-fish; that 'woman' has bought up the whole market."

"It was a small take, perhaps," remarked I.

"It was no such thing, sir. There were six splendid turbot, two creels of lobsters, and a basket of the best soles I have seen this year."

"What can she want with all these?—is she forbidden butcher-meat?"

"You'll find she is not, sir. She has left nothing there but a shin of beef and a kid. I wish any man good digestion that tries either of them; and as for vegetables, what do you think they asked me for six artichokes—small artichokes—not one of them the size of my closed fist?—a franc, sir, a franc! I give you my word of honour. I'll bring you to the place. I'll show you the old hag. If I don't live to make an example of her, don't call me Hogg!"

"But we shall have a famine if this goes on," cried I.

"It is a famine, sir. It is a famine at this very hour. It matters little to me whether the commodity fail altogether, or cost a price that makes it unattainable by me. If that woman likes to give four francs a-dozen for fresh eggs, when, I ask, are you or I likely to eat one?"

"And where are all these fine maxims we read of, about Supply being always commensurate with Demand?"

"In the lying volumes they were written in, sir. Supply takes care never to overstock the market.

When prices rise they never decline again. To ape that woman yonder, even in the cost of her marketing, there are always snobs ready and willing. There are people will tell you proudly how their cook outbid her Highness's, and carried off the asparagus, and relate with a flush of triumph that the spring chickens before you were only saved from imperial voracity by a stratagem."

From that day and that hour date our calamities. "The woman"—I revel in the word—it is the only vengeance left us—has regularly eaten us up. What her household consists of—how many tigers and boa-constrictors in human shape she may keep—I have no idea. How their appetites suffer no abatement—no decrease—how they never fall ill, I cannot conceive; neither do I know how they devour whole beds of asparagus and bushels of strawberries. As to butter, I believe they must anoint themselves with it!

Nor is it merely in matters of food they have exhausted us, but they have hired every carriage in the place; everything with four wheels or with two has been taken—every horse and every ass. So too, seaward, all is in their hands, and there is not a boat nor a boatman to be had. I know of nothing like this. I never heard anything to compare with it, except a pestilence or a visitation of locusts.

A few of us are vegetarians, and have taken to roots. A neighbour of mine is getting a second wheel to his wheelbarrow, and means to take his airings with the aid of his gardener; and I myself am contemplating a plank and a pair of paddles to serve me in lieu of a yacht; but all these devices will not save us from the graver danger that impends over us.

The Minister of Finance having heard, it is said, of our sudden prosperity—how house-rent has quadrupled, and butcher-meat risen to fabulous prices ; how eggs are selling at the price of pearls, and chickens bring what peacocks once sold for—the Minister, I say, has been pleased to recommend our being enrolled in the category of cities, and being promoted to the rank of municipal taxation.

Was there ever a swindle like it ? On the faith of its cheapness I settled here. I contracted with myself to submit to scores of things I had no mind for, simply because my pound here rose to thirty shillings. I put up with ill-paved and ill-lighted streets, second-hand furniture, and third-rate society. I braved dirt, dulness, and obscurity. I booked myself to encounter shocks to every principle and every prejudice that I possess, all for economy. And now *this* has been withdrawn from me, and I am left without even a fraction of compensation for all my sacrifices !

To be sure, I am told I live in a Capital ; but *cui bono* the Capital whose only development is dearness ? *Cui bono* the Capital which has not a resource beyond a village ? *Cui bono* a Capital where one Grand or Arch-duchess can eat up the market, drink all the milk, and ride all the horses ?

Sir John Bowring's white elephant is nothing to her ; for I observe, in the same town with that austere monster, there was food enough for five other megathers, who, being only grey, received coarser rations, though still very abundant ones ; but in our village the one "white elephant" has made a clean sweep of everything. Nor is it the least aggravating feature of the whole thing, that the population who are letting

their houses at the rates of Paris, and selling their chickens at the prices of Covent Garden—making fortunes on every hand, by every species of extortion and iniquity—that these people, I say, run about saying that they are ruined, that the minister is going to add a decime to the tax on balloons, or that before long no private gentleman will be able to keep his own diving-bell! You don't know anything of how we are ground down by our heavy imposts. O generation of bad arithmeticians! how will a nine per cent. tax measure with a three hundred per cent. house-rent? I now and then feel rather downhearted about all this; but I pluck up my courage as I think, after all, the evil may cure itself. Perhaps the Archduchess might take ill; perhaps she might take her departure. Perhaps the French Emperor, hearing of our prosperity (!)—it can scarcely be kept long a secret—may feel vexed, and order us once more to become a village. I can only say, if he should, I will recant all I have ever said of him, and be as good an Imperialist as if I had the robbery of the share-market or the concession of the last new line of railroad projected by M. Mirès.

As a village we were picturesque and we were prosperous: our small ways suited our small fortunes; and our ambitions were so moderate, and our aspirations so discreet, we were seldom ridiculous. All that is now changed. We have become a capital without wealth, and a metropolis without movement. Like the people of Siam, we have “taken it out in grandeur,” and must be satisfied with quarter-rations ourselves, that we may feed our “white elephant.”

# HERO-WORSHIP AND ITS DANGERS :

## A STORY.

JEAN PAUL tells us that there never was a nature yet formed without its vein of romance—that the most realistic and commonplace people we have ever met have their moods of romance, and that the cord, however little we may suspect it, runs through the woof of all humanity.

I am not able to affirm that he is right ; but certainly a little incident which has just occurred to me leads me to believe that there are cases of the affection in natures and temperaments in which nothing would have led me to suspect them. I need not be told that it is the men who have a most worldly character who are often seen marrying portionless wives ; that traits of self-sacrifice and devotion are being continually displayed by cold, ungenial, and, to all seeming, unimpressionable people. What I was not prepared for was to find that hero-worship could find a place in the heart of a hard, money-getting, money-lending fellow, whose ordinary estimate of humanity was based less on what they were than what they had. I own that I had

no other clue to the man's nature than that furnished by a few lines of a newspaper advertisement, which set forth his readiness to advance sums from one hundred to five hundred pounds on mere personal security, and at a most moderate rate of interest. And though the former amounted to obligations the breach of which would have reduced one to bondage, and the latter varied from eighty to a hundred and thirty per cent., he was so pleasant-looking—so chatty—so genially alive to the difficulties that beset youth—so forgivingly merciful to wasteful habits and ways, that I took to him from the moment I saw him, and signed my four bills for fifty each, and took up my hundred and eighteen pounds off the table with the feeling that at last I had found in an utter stranger that generous trustfulness and liberality I had in vain looked for amongst kindred and relatives.

We had a pint of madeira to seal the bargain. He told me in a whisper it was a priceless vintage. I believe him. On a rough calculation, I think every glass I took of it cost me forty-seven pounds some odd shillings. It is not, however, to speak of this event that I desire here. Mr. Nathan Joel and I ceased after a while to be the dear friends we swore to be over that madeira. The history of those four bills, too complicated to relate, became disagreeable. There were difficulties—there were renewals—there were protests—and there was a writ. Nathan Joel was—no matter what. I got out of his hands after three years by ceding a reversion worth five times my debt, with several white hairs in my whiskers, and a clearer view of gentlemen of the Jewish persuasion than I had ever picked up out of Ecclesiasticus.

A good many years rolled over—years in which I now and then saw mention of Mr. Joel as a plaintiff or an opposing creditor—once or twice as assignee, too. He was evidently thriving. Men were living very fast, smashes were frequent, and one can imagine the coast of Cornwall rather a lucrative spot after a stormy equinox. I came abroad, however, and lost sight of him; a chance mention, perhaps, in a friend's letter, how he had fallen into Joel's hands—that Joel advanced or refused to advance the money—something about cash, was all that I knew of him, till t'other evening the landlord of the little inn near my villa called up to ask if I knew anything of a certain Mr. Nathan Joel, who was then at his inn, without baggage, money, papers, or effects of any kind, but who on hearing my name cried out with ecstasy, "Ah, he knows me. You've only to ask Mr. O'Dowd who I am, and he'll satisfy you at once."

"So," thought I, "Joel! the Lord hath delivered thee into my hands, and now what sort of vengeance shall I take? Shall I ignore you utterly, and declare that your claim to my acquaintance is a gross and impudent fraud? Shall I tell the innkeeper I disown you?" If this was my first thought, it soon gave way—it was so long since the rascal had injured me, and I had cursed him very often for it since then. It was his nature too; *that* also ought to be borne in mind. When leeches cease sucking they die, and very probably money-lenders wither and dry up when they are not abstracting our precious metals.

"I'll go over and see if it be the man I know," said I, and set off at once towards the inn. As I went along, the innkeeper told me how the stranger had



arrived three nights back, faint, weary, and exhausted, saying that the guide refused to accompany him after he entered the valley, and merely pointed out the road and left him. "This much I got out of him," said the landlord, "but he is not inclined to say more, but sits there wringing his hands and moaning most piteously."

Joel was at the window as I came up, but seeing me he came to the door. "Oh, Mr. O'Dowd," cried he, "befriend me this once, sir. Don't bear malice, nor put your foot on the fallen, sir. Do pity me, sir, I beseech you."

The wretched look of the poor devil pleaded for him far better than his words. He was literally in rags, and such rags, too, as seemed to have once been worn by another, for he had a brown peasant jacket and a pair of goatskin breeches, and a pair of shoes fastened round his ankles with leather thongs.

"So," said I, "you have got tired of small robberies and taken to the wholesale line. When did you become a highwayman?"

"Ah, sir," cried he, "don't be jocose, don't be droll. This is too pitiful a case for laughter."

I composed my features into a semblance of decent gravity, and after a little while induced him to relate his story, which ran thus :

Mr. Joel, it appeared, who for some thirty years of life had taken a very practical view of humanity, estimating individuals pretty much like scrip, and ascribing to them what value they might bring in the market, had suddenly been seized with a most uncommon fervour for Victor Emmanuel, the first impulse being given by a "good thing he had done in Piedmontese fives," and a rather profitable investment he had once

made in the Cavour Canal. In humble gratitude for these successes, he had bought a print of the burly monarch, whose bullet head and bristling moustaches stared fiercely at him from over his fireplace, till by mere force of daily recurrence he grew to feel for the stern soldier a sentiment of terror dashed with an intense admiration.

“Talk of Napoleon, sir,” he would say, “he’s a humbug—an imposition—a wily, tricky, intriguing dodger. If you want a great man—a man that never knew fear—a man that is above all flimsy affectations—a man of the heroic stamp—there he is for you!

“As for Garibaldi, he’s not to be compared to him. Garibaldi was an adventurer, and made adventure a career; but here’s a king; here’s a man who has a throne, who was born in a palace, descended from a long line of royal ancestors, and instead of giving himself up to a life of inglorious ease and self-indulgence, he mounts his horse and heads a regiment, sir. He takes to the field like the humblest soldier in his rank, goes out, thrashes the Austrians, drives them out of Milan, hunts them over the plains of Lombardy, and in seven days raises the five per cents. from fifty-one and a half to eighty-two and a quarter ‘for the account.’ Show me the equal of that in history, sir. There’s not another man in Europe could have done as much for the market.”

His enthusiasm knew no bounds; he carried a gold piece of twenty francs, with the King’s image, to his watch-chain, and wore small coins, with the cross of Savoy, in his breast, as shirt-studs. An ardour intense as this is certain to bear its effects. Mr. Joel had often promised himself a trip to the Continent, of

which he knew nothing beyond Paris. He took, then, the season of autumn, when the House was up, and money-lending comparatively dull, and came abroad. He told his friends he was going to Vichy ; he affected a little gout. It was a disease gentlemen occasionally permitted themselves, and Mr. Joel was a rising man, and liked to follow the lead of persons of condition. Very different, however, was his object ; his real aim was to see the great man whose whole life and actions had taken such an intense hold on his imagination. To see him, to gaze on him, to possess himself fully of the actual living traits of the heroic sovereign ; and if by any accident, by any happy chance, by any of those turns of capricious fortune which now and then elevate men into a passing greatness, to get speech of him !—this Mr. Joel felt would be an operation more overwhelmingly entrancing than if Spanish bonds were to be paid off in full, or Poyais fives to be quoted at par in the market.

It is not impossible that Mr. Joel believed his admiration for the *Re Galantuomo* gave him a *bona fide* and positive claim on that monarch's regard. This is a delusion by no means rare : it possesses a large number of people, and influences them in their conduct to much humbler objects of worship than a king on his throne. Sculptors, authors, and painters know something of what I mean, and not uncommonly come to hear how ungraciously they are supposed to have responded to an admiration of which it is possible they never knew, and which it would be very excusable in them if they never valued. The worshipper, in fact, fancies that the incense he sends up as smoke should come back to him in some shape substantial.

However this may be, and I am not going to persist further on my reader's attention, Mr. Joel got to imagine that Victor Emmanuel would have felt as racy an enjoyment at meeting with *him*, as he himself anticipated he might experience in meeting the King. It goes a very long way in our admiration of any one to believe that the individual so admired has a due and just appreciation of ourselves. We start at least with one great predisposing cause of love—an intense belief in the good sense and good taste of the object of our affections.

Fully persuaded, then, that the meeting would be an event of great enjoyment to each, the chief difficulty was to find a "mutual friend," as the slang has it, to bring them into the desired relations.

This was really difficult. Had King Victor Emmanuel been an industrial monarch, given to cereals, or pottery, gutta-percha, cotton, or corrugated iron, something might have been struck out to present him with as pretext for an audience. Was he given to art, or devoted to some especial science?—a bust, a bronze, or a medal might have paved the way to an interview. The King, however, had no such leanings, and whatever his weaknesses, there were none within the sphere of the money-changer's attributions; and as Mr. Joel could not pretend that he knew of a short cut to Venice, or a secret path that led to the Vatican, he had to abandon all hopes of approaching the monarch by the legitimate roads.

See him I must, speak to him I will, were, however, the vows he had registered in his own heart, and he crossed the Alps with this firm resolve, leaving, as other great men before him have done, time and the

event to show the way where the goal had been so firmly fixed on.

At Turin he learned the King had just gone to Ancona to open a new line of railroad. He hastened after him, and arrived the day after the celebration to discover that his Majesty had left for Brindisi. He followed to Brindisi, and found the King had only stopped there an hour, and then pursued his journey to Naples. Down to Naples went Mr. Joel at once, but to his intense astonishment nobody there had heard a word of the King's arrival. They did not, indeed, allege the thing was impossible; but they slyly insinuated that, if his Majesty had really come, and had not thought proper to make his arrival matter of notoriety, they, as Italians, Neapolitans *surtout*, knew good manners better than to interfere with a retirement it was their duty to respect. This they said with a sort of half-droll significancy that puzzled Mr. Joel much, for he had lived little in Italy, and knew far more about Cremorne than the Casino!

Little dubious sentences, shallow insinuations, half-laughing obscurities, were not weapons to repel such a man as Joel. His mind was too steadfastly intent on its object to be deterred by such petty opposition. He had come to see the King, and see him he would. This same speech he made so frequently, so publicly, and so energetically, that at the various cafés which he frequented, no sooner was he seen to enter than some stranger to him—all were strangers—would usually come up in the most polite manner and express a courteous hope that he had been successful, and had either dined with his Majesty or passed the evening with him. It is needless to say that the general im-

pression was that poor Mr. Joel was a lunatic, but as his form of the malady seemed mild and inoffensive, his case was one entirely for compassion and pity.

A few, however, took a different view. They were of the police, and consequently they regarded the incident professionally. To their eyes, Joel was a Mazzinian, and came out specially to assassinate the King. It is such an obvious thing to the official mind that a man on such an errand would attract every notice to his intentions beforehand, that they not alone decided Joel to be an intended murderer, but they kept a strict record of all the people he accidentally addressed, all the waiters who served, and all the hackney cabmen who drove him, while the telegraphic wires of the whole kingdom vibrated with one name, asking, Who is Joel? trace Joel; send some one to identify Joel. Little poor Joel knew all this time that he had been photographed as he sat eating his oysters, and that scraps of his letters were pasted on a large piece of pasteboard in the Ministry of Police, that his handwriting might be shown under his varied attempts to disguise it.

One evening he sat much later than was his wont at a little open-air café of the St. Lucia quarter. The sky was gloriously starlit, and the air had all the balmy softness of the delicious south. Joel would have enjoyed it and the cool drink before him intensely, if it were not that his disappointed hopes threw a dark shadow over everything, and led him to think of all that his journey had cost him in cash, and all in the foregone opportunities of discounts and usuries.

A frequenter of the café, with whom he had occasionally exchanged greetings, sat at the same

table ; but they said little to each other, the stranger being evidently one not given to much converse, and rather disposed to the indulgence of his own thoughts in silence.

“Is it not strange,” said Joel, after a long pause, “that I must go back without seeing him?”

A half impatient grunt was all the reply, for the stranger was well weary of Joel and his sorrows.

“One would suppose that he really wanted to keep out of my way, for up to this moment no one can tell me if he be here or not.”

Another grunt.

“It is not that I have left anything undone, heaven knows. There isn’t a quarter of the town I have not walked, day and night, and his is not a face to be mistaken ; I d’know him at a glance.”

“And what in the devil’s name do you want with him when you have seen him?” exclaimed the other, angrily. “Do you imagine that a King of Italy has nothing better to do with his time than grant audiences to every idle John Bull whose debts or doctors have sent him over the Alps?” This rude speech was so fiercely delivered, and with a look and tone so palpably provocative, that Joel at once perceived his friend intended to draw him into a quarrel, so he finished off his liquor, took up his hat and cane, and with a polite *felice sera, Signor*, was about to withdraw.

“Excuse me,” said the stranger, rising, with a manner at once obsequious and apologetic. “I entreat you to forgive my rude and impatient speech. I was thinking of something else, and forgot myself. Sit down for one moment, and I will try and make you a proper reparation—a reparation you will be satisfied

with. You want to see the King, and you desire to speak with him : both can be done with a little courage ; and when I say this, I mean rather presence of mind—*aplomb*, as the French say—than anything like intrepidity or daring. Do you possess the quality I speak of ? ”

“ It is my precise gift—the essential feature of my character,” cried Joel, in ecstasy.

“ This, then, is the way—and mind I tell you this secret on the faith that as an English gentleman you preserve it inviolate—‘ parole Inglese,’ is a proverb with us, and we have reason to believe that it deserves its signification.”

Joel swore to observe the bond, and the other continued—

“ The King, it is needless to tell you, detests state and ceremonial ; he abhors courtly etiquette, and the life of a palace is to him the slavery of the galleys. His real pleasure is the society of a few intimates, whom he treats as equals, and with whom he discourses in the rough dialect of Piedmont, as it is talked in the camp by his soldiers. Even this amount of liberty is, however, sometimes not sufficient for this bold native spirit ; he longs for more freedom—for, in fact, that utter absence of all deference, all recognition of his high estate, which followers never can forget ; and to arrive at this, he now and then steals out at night and gains the mountains, where, with a couple of dogs and a rifle, he will pass two, three, perhaps four days, sharing the peasant’s fare and his couch, eating the coarsest food, and sleeping on straw, with a zest that shows what a veritable type of the medieval baron this Count of Savoy really is, and by what a mistake it is



that he belongs to an age where the romance of such a character is an anachronism !

“ You may feel well astonished that nobody could tell you where he is—whether here or at Turin, at Bologna, at Florence, or Palermo. The fact is they don’t know, that’s the real truth—not one of them knows ; all they are aware of is that he is off—away on one of those *escapades* on which it would be as much as life is worth to follow him ; and there is La Marmora, and there sits Minghetti, and yonder Della Rovere, not daring to hint a syllable as to the King’s absence, nor even to hazard a guess above a whisper as to when he will come back again. Now I can tell you where he is—a mere accident put me in possession of the secret. A *fattore* of my brother’s came up yesterday from the Terra di Lavoro and told how a strange man, large, strong boned, and none over bland-looking, had been quail-shooting over the Podere for the last two days ; he said he was a wonderful shot, but cared nothing about his game, which he gave freely away to any one he met. I made him describe him accurately, and he told me how he wore a tall high-crowned hat—a ‘calabrese,’ as they call it—with a short peacock’s feather, a brown jacket all covered with little buttons, leather small-clothes ending above the knees, which were naked, light gaiters half way up the leg, his gun slung at his back, pistols in his belt, and a *couteau de chasse* without a scabbard hung by a string to his waistbelt ; he added that he spoke little, and that little in a strange dialect, probably Roman, or from the Marches.

“ By a few other traits he established the identity of one whose real rank and condition he never had the

slightest suspicion of. Now, as the King is still there and as he told the Paroco of the little village at Catanzaro that he'd send him some game for his Sunday dinner, which he meant to partake of with him, you have only to set out to-night, reach Nola, where with the aid of a pony and a carratella you will make your way to Raniglia, after which, three miles of a brisk mountain walk—nothing to an Englishman—you'll arrive at Catanzaro, where there is a little inn. He calls there every evening, coming down the valley from St. Agata, and if you would like to meet him casually, as it were, you have only to set out a little before sunset, and stroll up the gorge ; there you'll find him." The stranger went on to instruct Mr. Joel how he should behave to the distinguished unknown—how, while carefully avoiding all signs of recognition, he should never forget that he was in the presence of one accustomed to the most deferential respect.

"Your manner," said he, "must be an artful blending of easy politeness with a watchful caution against over-familiarity ; in fact, try to make him believe that you never suspect his great rank, and at the same time take care that in your own heart you never forget it. Not a very easy thing to do, but the strong will that has sent you so far will doubtless supply the way to help you further ;" and with a few more such friendly counsels he wished Joel success and a good-night, and departed.

Mr. Joel took his place in the "rotondo" of the diligence—no other was vacant—and set off that night in company with two priests, a gendarme, and a captured galley-slave, who was about to show the officers of justice where a companion of his flight had

sought concealment. The company ate and drank, smoked villanous tobacco, and sang songs all night, so that when Joel reached Nola he was so overcome with fatigue, headache, and sickness, that he had to take to bed, where the doctor who was sent for bled him twice, and would have done so four or five times more, if the patient, resisting with the little strength left him, had not put him out of the room and locked the door, only opening it to creep down stairs and escape from Nola for ever. He managed with some difficulty to get a place in a baroccino to Raniglia, and made the journey surrounded with empty wine-flasks, which required extreme care and a very leisurely pace, so that the distance, which was but eighteen miles, occupied nearly as many hours. It took him a full day to recruit at Raniglia, all the more since the rest of the journey must be made on foot.

"I own, sir," said Mr. Joel, whom I now leave to speak for himself, "it was with a heavy heart I arose that morning and thought of what was before me. I had already gone through much fatigue and considerable illness, and I felt that if any mishap should befall me in that wild region, with its wild-looking, semi-savage inhabitants, the world would never hear more of me. It was a sad way to finish a life which had not been altogether unsuccessful, and I believe I shed tears as I fastened on my knapsack and prepared for the road. A pedlar kept me company for two miles, and I tried to induce him to go on the whole way with me to Catanzaro, but he pointed to his pack, and said, 'There are folk up there who help themselves too readily to such wares as I carry. I'd rather visit Catanzaro with an empty pack than a full one.' He was curious to

learn what led *me* to visit the place, and I told him it was to see the fine mountain scenery and the great chestnut and cork woods of which I had heard so much. He only shook his head in reply. I don't know whether he disbelieved me, or whether he meant that the journey would scarce repay the fatigue. I arrived at Catanzaro about three in the afternoon. It was a blazing hot day—the very air seemed to sparkle with the fiery sun's rays, and the village, in regular Italian fashion, was on the very summit of a mountain, around which other mountains of far greater height were grouped in a circle. Every house was shut up, the whole population was in bed, and I had as much difficulty in getting admission to the inn as if I had come at midnight."

I will not trouble my reader to follow Mr. Joel in his description of or comment upon Italian village life, nor ask him to listen to the somewhat lengthy dialogue that took place between him and the priest, a certain Don Lertoro, a most miserable, half-famished fellow, with the worst countenance imaginable, and a vein of ribaldry in his talk that, Mr. Joel declared, the most degraded creature might have been ashamed of.

By an artful turn of the conversation, Joel led the priest to talk of the strangers who occasionally came up to visit the mountain, and at last made bold to ask, as though he had actually seen him, who was the large, strong-boned man, with a rifle slung behind him? he did not look like a native of these parts?

"Where did you meet him?" asked the priest, with a furtive look.

"About a mile from this," said Joel; "he was standing on the rock over the bridge as I crossed the torrent."

"Che Bestia!" muttered Don Lertoro, angrily; but whether the compliment was meant for Joel or the unknown did not appear. Unwilling to resume the theme, however, he affected to busy himself about getting some salad for supper, and left Joel to himself.

While Joel sat ruminating, in part pleasantly, over the craft of his own address, and in part dubiously, thinking over Don Lertoro's exclamation, and wondering if the holy man really knew who the stranger was, the priest returned to announce the supper.

By Joel's account, a great game of fence followed the meal, each pushing the other home with very searching inquiries, but Joel candidly declaring that the Don, shrewd as he was, had no chance with him, insomuch as that, while he completely baffled the other as to what led him there, how long he should remain, and where go to afterwards, he himself ascertained that the large, heavy-boned man with the rifle might usually be met every evening about sunset in the gorge coming down from St. Agata; in fact, there was a little fountain about three miles up the valley which was a favourite spot of his to eat his supper at—"a spot easily found," said the priest, "for there are four cypress trees at it, and on the rock overhead you'll see a wooden cross, where a man was murdered once."

This scarcely seemed to Joel's mind as a very appetizing element; but he said nothing, and went his way. As the day was drawing to a close, Mr. Joel set out for the fountain. The road, very beautiful and picturesque as it was, was eminently lonely. After leaving the village he never saw a human being; and though the evening was deliciously fine, and the wild flowers at either side scented the air, and a clear rivulet ran

along the roadside with a pleasant murmur, there was that in the solitude and the silence, and the tall peaked mountains, lone and grim, that terrified and appalled him. Twice was he so overcome that he almost determined to turn back and abandon the expedition.

Onward, however, he went, encouraging himself by many little flatteries and compliments to his own nature. How bold he was? how original! how unlike other money-lenders! what manifest greatness there must be somewhere in the temperament of one like him, who could thus leave home and country, security, and the watchful supervision of Scotland Yard, to come into the wild mountains of Calabria, just to gratify an intellectual craving! These thoughts carried him over miles of the way, and at last he came in sight of the four cypress trees; and as he drew nigh, sure enough there was the little wooden cross standing out against the sky; and while he stopped to look at it, a loud voice, so loud as to make him start, shouted out, "Alto là—who are you?"

Mr. Joel looked about him on every side, but no one was to be seen. He crossed the road, and came back again, and for a moment he seemed to doubt whether it was not some trick of his own imagination suggested the cry, when it was repeated still louder; and now his eyes caught sight of a tall high-crowned hat, rising above the rank grass, on a cliff over the road, the wearer being evidently lying down on the sward. Joel had but time to remove his hat courteously, when the figure sprang to his feet, and revealed the person of an immense man. He looked gigantic on the spot he stood on, and with his stern, flushed features, and enormous mustaches, turned fiercely up-

wards at the points, recalled to Mr. Joel the well-known print over his chimney-piece at home. "Where are you going?" cried he, sternly.

"Nowhere in particular, sir. Strolling to enjoy my cigar," replied Joel, trembling.

"Wait a moment," said the other, and came clattering down the cliff, his rifle, his pistols, and his ammunition-pouches making a terrific uproar as he came.

"You came from Catanzaro—were there any gendarmes there when you left?"

"None, sire: not one," said Joel, who was so overcome by the dignity of the gentleman that he forgot all his intended reserve.

"No lies, no treachery, or, by the precious tears of the Madonna, I'll blow your brains out."

"Your Majesty may believe every word I utter in the length and breadth of the Peninsula; you have not a more devoted worshipper."

"Did you see the priest Don Lertoro?"

"Yes, sire; it was *he* told me where I should find your Majesty, at the well here, under the cypress trees."

"Scioccone!" cried the stranger; but whether the epithet was meant for Joel or the Cure did not appear. A very long and close cross-examination ensued, in which Joel was obliged not merely to explain who he was, whence he came, and what he came for, but to narrate a variety of personal circumstances which at the time it seemed strange his Majesty would care to listen to—such as the amount of money he had with him, how much more he had left behind at Naples, how he had no friends in that capital, nor any one like to interest themselves about him if he should get into trouble, or require to be assisted in any way. Appa-

rently the King was satisfied with all his replies, for he finished by inviting him to partake of some supper with him; and producing a small basket from under the brushwood, he drew forth a couple of fowls, some cheese, and a flask of wine. It was not till he had drunk up three large goblets of the wine that Joel found himself sufficiently courageous to be happy. At last, however, he grew easy, and even familiar, questioning his Majesty about the sort of life he led, and asking how it was that he never fell into the hands of brigands.

Nothing could be more genial or good-humoured than the King; he was frankness itself; he owned that his life might possibly be better; that on the whole his father confessor was obliged to bear a good deal from him; and that all his actions were not in strictest conformity with church discipline.

"You ought to marry again; I am persuaded, sir," said Joel, "it would be the best thing you could do."

"I don't know," said the other, thoughtfully. "I have a matter of seven wives as it is, and I don't want any more."

"Ah! your Majesty, I guess what you mean," said Joel, winking; "but that's not what I would suggest. I mean some strong political connection—some alliance with a royal house, Russian or Bavarian, if, indeed, Austrian were not possible."

"On the whole," said Joel, "I found that he didn't much trust any one; he thought ill of Louis Napoleon, and called him some hard names; he was not over complimentary to the Pope; and as for Garibaldi, he said they had once been thick as thieves, but of late they had seen little of each other, and for his part he



was not sorry for it. All this time, sir," continued Joel, "his Majesty was always fancying something or other that I wore or carried about me; first it was my watch, which I felt much honoured by his deigning to accept; then it was my shirt-studs, then my wrist-buttons, then my tobacco-pouch, then my pipe, a very fine meerschaum, and at last, to my intense astonishment, my purse, whose contents he actually emptied on the table, and counted out before me, asking me if I had not any more about me, either in notes or bills, for it seemed a small sum for a 'Milordo,' so he called me, to travel with.

"Whatever I had, however, he took it—took every carlino of it—saying, 'There's no getting any change up here—there are no bankers, my dear Signor Joel; but we'll meet at Naples one of these days, and set all these things to rights.'"

"I suppose the wine must have been far stronger than I thought; perhaps, too, drinking it in the open air made it more heady; then the novelty of the situation had its effect—it's not every day that a man sits hobnobbing with a king. Whatever the reason, I became confused and addled, and my mind wandered. I forgot where I was. I believe I sang something—I am not sure what—and the King sang, and then we both sang together; and at last he whistled with a silver call-whistle that he wore, and he gave me in charge to a fellow—a ragged rascally-looking dog he was—to take me back to Catanzaro; and the scoundrel, instead of doing so, led me off through the mountains for a day and a half, and dropped me at last at Reccone, a miserable village, without tasting food for twelve hours. He made me change clothes with him, too, and take his

dirty rags, this goat-skin vest and the rest of it, instead of my new tweed suit ; and then, sir, as we parted, he clapped me familiarly on the shoulder, and said, ‘ Mind me, *amico mio*, you’re not to tell the padrone, when you see him, that I took your clothes from you, or he’ll put a bullet through me. Mind *that*, or you’ll have to settle your scores with one of my brothers.’

“ ‘ By the padrone you perhaps mean the King,’ said I, haughtily.

“ ‘ King, if you like,’ said he, grinning ; ‘ we call him “ Ninco Nanco : ” and now that they’ve shot Pilone, and taken Stoppa, there’s not another brigand in the whole of Italy to compare with him.’ Yes, sir, out came the horrid truth. It was Ninco Nanco, the greatest monster in the Abruzzi, I had mistaken for Victor Emmanuel. It was to him I had presented my watch, my photograph, my seal-ring, and my purse with forty-two napoleons. Dirty, ragged, wretched, in tatters, and famished, I crept on from village to village till I reached this place yesterday evening, only beseeching leave to be let lie down and die, for I don’t think I’ll ever survive the shame of my misfortune, if my memory should be cruel enough to preserve the details.”

“ Cheer up, Joel ; the King is to review the National Guard to-day. I’ll take care that you shall have a good place to see him, and a good dinner afterwards.”

“ No, sir ; I’ll not go and look at him. Ninco Nanco has cured me of hero-worship. I’ll go back to town and see after the exchanges. The sovereigns that come from the mint are the only ones I mean to deal with from this day forward.”

## THE PICTURESQUE IN MORALS.

ONE of our periodicals lately contained a paper, inquiring, with some skill, into the sources of what we call the picturesque, and asking how it comes to pass that the ruined wall, the broken gable, the lichen-clad stone, afford us a pleasure that a trim enclosure, a finished building, and a well-scrubbed pavement fail to afford. Though the writer in question put some very searching and pertinent questions, though he exhibited in strong contrast the two sides of his thesis, I am not very sure that he did not leave us in the end to the same doubts and difficulties which beset us when we set out.

The search after truth is, however, a sort of veturino journey, in which, if you make little progress towards your destination, you are always gaining some small experience or other on the way. There is no fable so applicable to our daily lives as that of the husbandman who bequeathed the treasure to his three sons, who arrived at their riches by a search after a very different El Dorado. This is the story of every one of us. For one man who goes straight to his object, and finds that object worth all his devotion, there are thousands who turn off into some by-path of

fortune, well satisfied with what they have found there, and right contented to leave that great journey they once dreamed of till some later day ; and thus we no more realize to ourselves the greatness we imagined in our school-days than we marry our first loves, or do any one of the scores of things we once held to be the only tie that bound us to existence.

The author of the paper on the picturesque has not, I own, revealed to me the secret of that occult attachment that binds us to the crumbling arch, the shattered pillar, the lightning-struck trunk. We know, with our great humourist, that the Rector's horse is beautiful, and the Curate's picturesque, but we cannot tell why ; nor can we explain why what to the eye of possession seems mean and miserable, to the eye of painting may have a value all but priceless. Let not my reader for a moment imagine that I have discovered the secret of this curious tendency—a tendency amongst educated people that is almost an instinct. I am as much in the dark about it as my neighbours. In thinking over the matter, however, it occurred to me that there might be some mysterious chord in our nature that only vibrated to the touch of compassion—that we had in our hearts a little Bethesda pool of kindness that adversity alone could stir, and that whatever inspired us with a sentiment of tender pity reacted in gratitude upon the object, and rendered it to our eyes pleasing, interesting, and picturesque.

Smug comfort and trim gentility have no want of us ; they make no call upon our affections, no appeal to our sympathies. Nay, in their very self-sufficiency they seem to resent the interference of our interest. Not so with the ruined cabin or the tattered shieling,

the weather-beaten hovel or the tottering tower ; these come to us for pity. They have a story, and a touching one. They tell of a time when they bestowed comfort and shelter, they speak of a bygone—perhaps of even power and greatness. There are ruins which, even in decay, are princely ; and in our sadness may lie the secret of that sympathy which binds us to them, and renders them, as all objects of our relief really are, our best benefactors. Bear in mind that through all our sense of the picturesque there mingles a tender melancholy. It is the spirit the very opposite to that inspired by the grotesque. There is no levity about it at all, and from him who would endeavour to invest it with such a character, we turn away revolted.

Whatever so touches our sensibilities that we weave a story about it to ourselves, that we think of it with reference to a past time—a time perhaps of bright promise and hope—that we fancy how under other circumstances a happier destiny might have befallen it, and that there must be some cruelty in the fate that has left of what was once beautiful these shattered columns, these broken capitals, these crumbling friezes ; it is out of these mingled compassions and regrets we arrive at what, by a sort of compromise with our feelings, we call the picturesque.

Now, I am less anxious to prove my theory—which my reader may take for what it may seem worth to him—than to extend its application, and I would ask if a great deal of the sympathy we accord to whatever is wrong in this world of ours, is not derived from a process akin to that I have just spoken of, and if our admiration of naughty people be not a part and parcel of our love of the picturesque ?

That we *do* admire them I suppose will not be denied. We are not merely admirers ; we imitate them in their style, their dress, and their belongings. Our novelists take them as their types of fascination, and our preachers warn us against them as snares.

Now, I would beg to ask, is it not their picturesque character that is the source of all this captivation ? Is it not the reputation in ruins, the fissured fame, the gracefully dilapidated virtue, that we admire so fervently ? Take up any French novel you will, and do you not find that the moral people are represented with all those traits of exactness and order which we reprobate pictorially, while the naughty ones are as broken, as irregular, as abounding in lights and shadows, as an Elizabethan manor-house ? Is there a moment of hesitation where one would like to dwell ? The faultless heroine is the semi-detached villa in the Edgware Road. The erring loveliness is the embowered cottage on Windermere.

The architecture of the one is cold, formal, and unsightly. There may be scores of conveniences—there may be two kinds of water on the premises, and gas laid on ; but who would not say, Let me rather have that lovely nest under the elms, with the river in front and the mountains behind, even though Ellen or Mary Anne should have to have to fill her pitcher at the well under the rocks ?

The love of the picturesque extends to ethics, all the lessons that we imbibe about order, and neatness, and symmetry, becoming vanishing views when we find ourselves in presence of fractured moralities and tottering proprieties. The incessant play of light and shade in doubtful natures ~~makes~~ makes them so pictorial to

our eyes, that many a fast young lady is as good as an Etty, and I have seen young married women as rich in colour—I am talking pictorially—and as daringly composed as a Turner. It is no inherent love of vice, no preference of the wrong to the right, that makes French novelists give all the attractive features to the damaged reputation, and all the deterrent ones to the well conducted. It is simply because it is easier. The former “lends itself” naturally to picturesque description, the latter is only a matter of rigid right lines and rectangular shadows.

Let M. Blondin walk along the highroad, where it is broad, and smooth, and level, and how much interest will he excite? It is his perilous position, eighty yards from the earth, that appals us—it is the fact that a single inch to the right or left is death—it is the sense that he is doing something so terribly dangerous that no other could dare it—that attracts to him all our sympathy; and this is, perhaps, the explanation of the interest we accord to the naughty people. They are doing the most hazardous of all earthly things. They are *par excellence* the great rope-dancers; and we watch them with an anxiety certainly not diminished in its intensity, when they add beauty to their daring, and grace to their dexterity.

It said that the frequent contemplation of the great works of art in Continental galleries has educated the expression of foreigners, and imparted to their features a higher meaning and a more elevated cast of countenance than we observe in our own people, who never look at anything but themselves. May not the constant image of French coquetry, so charmingly portrayed by French writers, have had a similar influence

upon the manners of Frenchwomen, who behold, as in a glass, all the captivations that enslave, all the witcheries that bewilder mankind? I have no doubt that this double reaction of cause and effect has done much for naughtiness. But what has most of all promoted its success is the sour aspect in which respectability has been pleased to display itself. I'm sure I'd rather leave all the good music to the devil than I would leave him all the good looks, all the charming ways, and all the little witcheries that poetize this dull life of ours, and show us that there are scores of things to interest us besides a rise in Turks or a fall in Mexicans.

Now, a group of the well-behaved beside one of the naughty is like hanging a Poussin next a Claude—there is no light, no brightness, no warmth, nothing cheerful or attractive, in that mass of dark-brown and olive; and we turn with pleasure to the golden sunlight and the flickering water and the pink-streaked sky, as to a land of beauty and enjoyment. I heard a preacher t'other day declare that the naughty people were a snare; and I immediately thought, Why not try and ensnare us with the correct ones? I'm certain, in a vast number of cases it is not vice that is attractive: it is the *mise en scène* of vice that captivates. It is, in short, the Picturesque that carries away our sympathies; and we are no more master of our sensibilities when exposed to its influences, than we are able to explain the mechanism of its action.

The dash of the realistic with the ideal that runs through naughtiness has a wonderful power. It is a double-shotted gun, sure to hit somewhere. What gave the peculiar attraction to the clever gallery of



Leech we saw t'other day, was the blending of the actual daily life we lead with a subdued poetry. The artist displayed us as we are, but never failed to let in some slight indication of what we might be. The vulgar old frowsy mother was easily forgotten in the bloom and freshness of the long-eyelashed daughter; and if the former did not set your thoughts a-story-weaving, how beautifully suggestive was the latter!

The naughty people are adepts in this combination; in other words, they are masters of the picturesque. Without them life would have no dramatic situations—no stage effects. Make the genteel comedy of this world out of lady patronesses and archdeacons, and how many would sit out the play?

As to being snares, they are no more snares than the berries of the deadly nightshade, a very brief experience of which shows that they were not meant for nutriment. This world must have scores of things that cannot be made directly profitable to morality. What an abundance of glorious vegetation there is that never contributed to human life—and should we like to forego it?

For my own part, I wish the well-to-do-people would be pleasing. I'd like to meet charming bishops and fascinating Lady Bountifuls. I'd be much gratified if education commissioners were witty, and poor-law guardians amusing; and, if they would only condescend to be picturesque, I'd withdraw my subscription from the other establishment, and never darken its doors again.

Once more I say, the great effort of moralists should be to keep vice to its coarse habiliments, and never let it masquerade in the bright costumes and

graceful colours that captivate. Vice is not so seductive, as vice, as in its travesty of what we admire and cherish. Sever the connection, and, like a bad swimmer without his life-belt, a few struggles will suffice to finish it.

Strip wickedness of its accessories, and you'll not have to call it a snare. When it ceases to be "picturesque," it ceases to be perilous.

## TWADDLING REMINISCENCES.

Books of gossip, reminiscences, and twaddle, are just now greatly in vogue, and I think bespeak a very low state of public taste. When such books were written with smartness, much knowledge of life, and bore upon them, besides, the impress of a strong individuality in the writer, their popularity was intelligible enough ; but ours is not an age of Horace Walpoles, and the consequence is, we are deluged with little dreary diaries in which the most uninteresting people in the world record where, how, and with whom they lived, the only point being the personality, and the sole relief to the uniform dulness lying in the reader's conviction that if the perusal of such trash be dreary, the inditing of it ought to be drearier still.

First of all, the mass of these writers, stimulated by that self-same vanity that has driven them into print, are possessed with an intense desire to be personally favourites with their readers. They want you to think them high-minded, noble, generous creatures, with grand motives and high aspirations. They desire to make you believe it is no small privilege to be admitted to their society, surrounded as they are with the high and mighty personages that figure through

their pages. They impress you with not only their acquirements and information, but with a profound respect for their social condition—the daily habits of their lives—their nice taste—their admirable breeding.

In a word, they admit you to a circle of wits, beauties, men of genius, and men of power, all to see that they themselves are centres around which these celebrities are “doing orbit,” so that you naturally feel abashed by the very thought of criticising or questioning any statement put forward by such mighty authority. What! shall I arraign the judgment of him who knew Metternich and Talleyrand?—who talked political ecstasies with Madame de Staël and cosmogonies with Humboldt?

It is thus these people present themselves always. From the high ground of intimacy with men of distinction they discourse to us small folk on Men and Women and Things in General, not at their own risk and peril, however—not courageously saying, I think this, I say that, I proclaim the other—but, under the shield of a great name, shooting forth some petty slander or small irony on a contemporary, as though “in our set,” “we,” “nous autres,” had this estimate of him—such was our opinion, and you know who “we” were.

The first thing to bear in mind with respect to these *Raconteurs*—and I am driven to a French word in spite of myself—is, that it may be assumed as a maxim that great men are never great with little “people.” It is not the Duke of Wellington as he was that we see in Mr. Raikes’s book; it is Mr. Raikes’s conception of the Great Duke—a very different matter indeed! It is surely not enough that

the portrait-painter should have a great subject—he should have also the power to understand it—to appreciate and to depict it.

Now, it may be confidently asserted, that of the men admitted to the real intimacy of the great, nothing is rarer than to find one who has the leisure, the taste, or the talent to be an author.

It does not belong to these people's lives to write books; or, if they do, are they books of gossip and small-talk? The men who make history have not any very high estimation of the men who write it. Indeed the very unfaithfulness with which passing incidents are treated inspires this contempt, and suggests a low opinion of those who practise it.

Whenever, therefore, we find a page studded with illustrious names, flung out in all the careless ease of everyday acquaintanceship, and read, "I was with Her Royal Highness on that morning at breakfast when the news came," &c., &c.; or "walking one evening in the garden at St. Cloud with the Duc d'Orleans, when we came to that little group representing," &c., we are cheated for the moment into a sense of expectancy—we say to ourselves, "Here is a prince about to open his heart to us; for once we are about to know what these men are by nature—how in the freedom of their friendships——" and then we come upon a little twaddling remark or a small jest that might have been said by His Highness's valet. Very disappointing is all this: but there is worse—far worse, in the conceited self-complacency of the narrator, impressing upon us at every word what good fortune is ours to have met with him—what a happy turn of fate it was that led us into his company.

I suspect that a really good diary would be a very difficult literary performance, and one totally out of the reach of any but a very gifted individual: to record briefly, sharply, and yet clearly, passing incidents, to jot down the leading events of a life, giving them the degree of importance hereafter that would illustrate the time they were written in, and the light they would throw upon the manners of an age; to seize the characteristics of an era, and preserve them by a story or an anecdote; to connect the great events of the time with the smaller ones that were simultaneous with them; to be at once thoughtful and at ease; to exert your mind to treat the events of the hour sagaciously, and yet never lose the tone of intimacy which is the best feature of a journal—to write, in fact, as you would talk to a friend over the fire, when that friend was one to whom you would not willingly show yourself as dull, incompetent, or commonplace:—all this cannot be so easy as to be the gift of each and every who writes his *Life and Times*.

It is quite certain that no small part of the pleasure such books as these afford us is derived from the fact that they exhibit great people, the mighty rulers and conquerors of the world, pretty much in their ordinary lives as small and as everyday as ourselves.

An Emperor with a lame charger or a tight boot, or a court beauty with a disaster to her back hair, is not a whit more dignified in her wrath than the stockbroker our neighbour when upset in his cab, or his lady wife when disappointed by her dressmaker.

We like to know how, besides taking their share of the ills that flesh is heir to, Kings and Kaisers have their fits of sulk and moroseness, and suffer their little

mortifications of wounded self-love and vanity like the rest of us ; and it is very pleasant to us to hear that, even to the common forms of our everyday use, these people must come when they want to express themselves, just as they have to breathe the atmosphere with us in common, and grow warm under the same sun. Still, I opine, all this is not very instructive or very elevating reading. I suspect that we are all prone enough to deterioration without being urged to it by a stimulant. So far from any over-estimate of those above us, I think the turn of our age is to hold them too cheaply, and we certainly do seize upon any disparaging element in a great character with an avidity akin to that we display in unmasking a rogue and exposing an impostor.

To all these varieties of our bad taste, these memorial-mongers minister. They say, Here is a gossip-loving public to whom nothing is sacred. The more we can reveal to them of the private life of our victims the better. Let us display them, then, in their hours of sickness and depression—in their times of exaggerated gaiety and folly—in their moments of excited vanity and success. Strange if some words of weakness, some dropping syllables of self-love or absurdity, will not escape them ; and what a triumph to show how the conqueror of Blenheim could be shabby over a sixpence, or the hero of Trafalgar shed tears of delight over his own praises in a song !

Were the allied fleets of France and Spain,—was the fatal marksman in the maintop, as terrible an enemy of poor Nelson as the biographer who lately wrote of his life at Dresden ? Had the great Emperor such a

foe in all his fiery career as that Doctor who chronicled his last years at St. Helena?

And these are the people whom we encourage and foster, notice in all our leading journals, and nourish to fifth editions. O evil generation of gossips! why will you revel in your neighbour's shortcomings? Is there one of those who has made his name great amongst us of latter years who would not have been greater without his biographer? Why is it that the Great Duke stands forth pre-eminent above all; is it not that it is by his own glorious acts, told in his own honest words, that we must regard him. His despatches defy the biographer. He stands there beyond the perils of praise or slander.

Think of poor Moore! All who knew him—and there are some left can recall the bright sunshine of his presence, his beaming eye, his smile, his chirping accents, whether in wit or song—and read of him in Lord Russell's biography, and with what bitterness, what positive anger, you turn to traits in his nature of which you should never have been told.

Why were these brought into the Record? What of carelessness—what of indelicacy—was there in not cancelling what mere taste, if there were no friendship, would have erased? Was there ever yet that man whom biography could not make little? Take him who deals with the greatest themes—with the highest powers of mind—and has he not his ills and ailments, his days of depression, his seasons of fretfulness and impatience, and his times of distrust and disbelief? Is it of these we ask the registry? do we want the chronicle of the words he uttered in his pain, or the bitter syllables that broke from him in his passion? We are



severe in our execration of the wretches who strip the dead on the field of battle, but we have no words of blame for those who do infinitely worse—who strip the fair fame of such as have shed lustre over our age, and made our own lives more enjoyable—as have, so to say, admitted us dull folk to the warmth of their glowing genius, and let us feel for the moment the ecstasy of their own gifted natures. For these spoilers we have nothing but praise.

Of course there is the other school—those who hold a brief for their hero, and make him out a monster of unmitigated virtue. I declare, if I were driven to the choice, I had rather have my “life taken” by the former than by these.

The great statesman we are now mourning has not escaped the indiscreet zeal of these ill-advised admirers. Not satisfied to chronicle the genial traits of a charming nature—not content to dwell upon the graceful qualities by which friends were won and adversaries were conciliated—they insist upon presenting him to us as a sayer of smart things—sharp, pungent, and epigrammatic.

Now, Lord Palmerston had not a particle of Wit. There is not on record one saying of his which might not have been uttered by any member of his Cabinet; and this is to say all that need be said.

He was the essence of “a man of the world;” but it was the “man of the world” elevated by great cares and great duties; accustomed to deal with the weightiest interests and the grandest themes, his good sense stimulated to its highest exercise, and his elastic temperament pressed, but not crushed, by the weight upon it.

They said he "knew Parliament well;" but I am certain he knew "the Salon" better; and it was in transferring to "the House" the happy tone and manner that won success with the world, that he achieved his great triumphs in public life.

Madame Lieven said of the Great Duke, that he had a little more common sense than all the rest of the world; so might it be affirmed of Lord Palmerston, that he had a little more tact than all the rest of mankind. Even in France, the land of tact *par excellence*, he had not his equal.

Let none take a low estimate of the quality, which is, after all, *epigram in action*, being the quick-wittedness of one whose sympathies embrace so many temperaments, that he is never at a loss for the argument to address, the flattery to apply, the palliative to suggest. What a boon to a great deliberative body to have had a man thus gifted ever infusing this spirit into its deliberations! What a gain to less happily endowed natures that this fine, genial temperament was able to contribute its wealthy resources to all around, and make a very atmosphere of influence about him!

It was the rarest thing imaginable for him to speak in a more elevated tone, or to treat a question in a more lofty spirit, than he would have used in talking to a friend over a bottle of claret. The very stories that made his "apropos," the jests that supplied his points, were precisely such as mingle through after-dinner talk.

The day of witty people is gone by. If there be men clever enough nowadays to say smart things, they are too clever to say them. The world we live in pre-

fers placidity to brilliancy, and a man like Curran, in our present-day society, would be as unwelcome as a pyrotechnist with a pocketful of squibs.

That Lord Palmerston's personal qualities gave the whole popularity his administration enjoyed, none will deny. His racy, manly, high-hearted temperament was a great element to throw into a Cabinet of dreary Whigs and speculative Radicals. The Irishry of his nature was a spell that told upon the phlegmatic materials he was allied to, and his geniality was the link that connected the Cabinet with the country.

They take very low ground for Lord Palmerston, to my thinking, who simply regard him as the restraining element in the late Ministry—the power by which headstrong and venturesome men were held in check, and their projects for change firmly and resolutely resisted. By assigning to him such a part as this, they represent him to us pretty much in the light of a military chaplain at a mess-table, whose presence is just sufficient to repress the levity of the company, but whose influence has never gone far enough to introduce a more elevated tone in conversation, and whose departure will be the signal for all sorts of excess.

I think higher of Lord Palmerston than this. I believe that in restraining his colleagues he gave the country time for reflection, and that in that interval the country became Conservative—not Conservative in the interest of this man or of that, but in a spirit of distrust in great changes—in a settled confidence that we were well governed—in the conviction that the country exercises a greater and more direct influence over the men they sent to Parliament than was ever possessed before, and in a growing belief that to

increase the pressure of such influence might not be either salutary or safe.

Such, to my thinking, were some of the late lessons of Lord Palmerston's life, and we owe him, for them, a far more enduring gratitude than had he been a wit and an epigrammatist; and they who would invest him with these are but forging his name to a bill which his fame will dishonour.

"Make me not Rich nor Poor," was the prayer of one who knew wisdom; and how many of those whose lives we have lately been reading would willingly have made the same supplication?

It is time, however, to discourage these Brummagem biographies—these jotting down diaries, which, assuming the tone of intimacy, think they can dispense with good taste. That they fail egregiously in all truthful evidence of what they treat, is in almost every man's experience to prove. Most men who have moved at all in the world have met occasionally persons of note and distinction, and yet, let any one of those endeavour to convey some notion of the traits of those same celebrities—their look, manner, tone, or gesture—and will he not own that his sketch does not recall, even to his own eyes, the original; that in the very tableau of which they formed part, there was so much that assisted the scene, that gave it vigour and reality, to omit it is fatal, and yet it cannot be revived? What deeper bathos is there than to hear the jest repeated by dull mediocrity that you once had heard from Sydney himself? And this is just what these reminiscence people are doing every day and every hour. Boswell was forced to descend to a Parasite that he might rise a Biographer. These people want the crown without

the martyrdom ; nay, more, they ask for a share of their hero's honours, and a place beside him on his throne.

Good biography, like good champagne, is all that is excellent, healthful, and agreeable. It is the fictitious liquor that is baneful, the stuff that acidifies while you drink it, and actually engenders a dislike to the noble tipple it counterfeits.

"Campbell," said Lord Lyndhurst, referring to the "Lives of the Chancellors," "has added one more to the terrors of death ; for if I do not outlive him, he will write my life." Now, though I never was charged with the custody of the Queen's conscience, my own tells me that the sentiment was a most natural one.

THE END.

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